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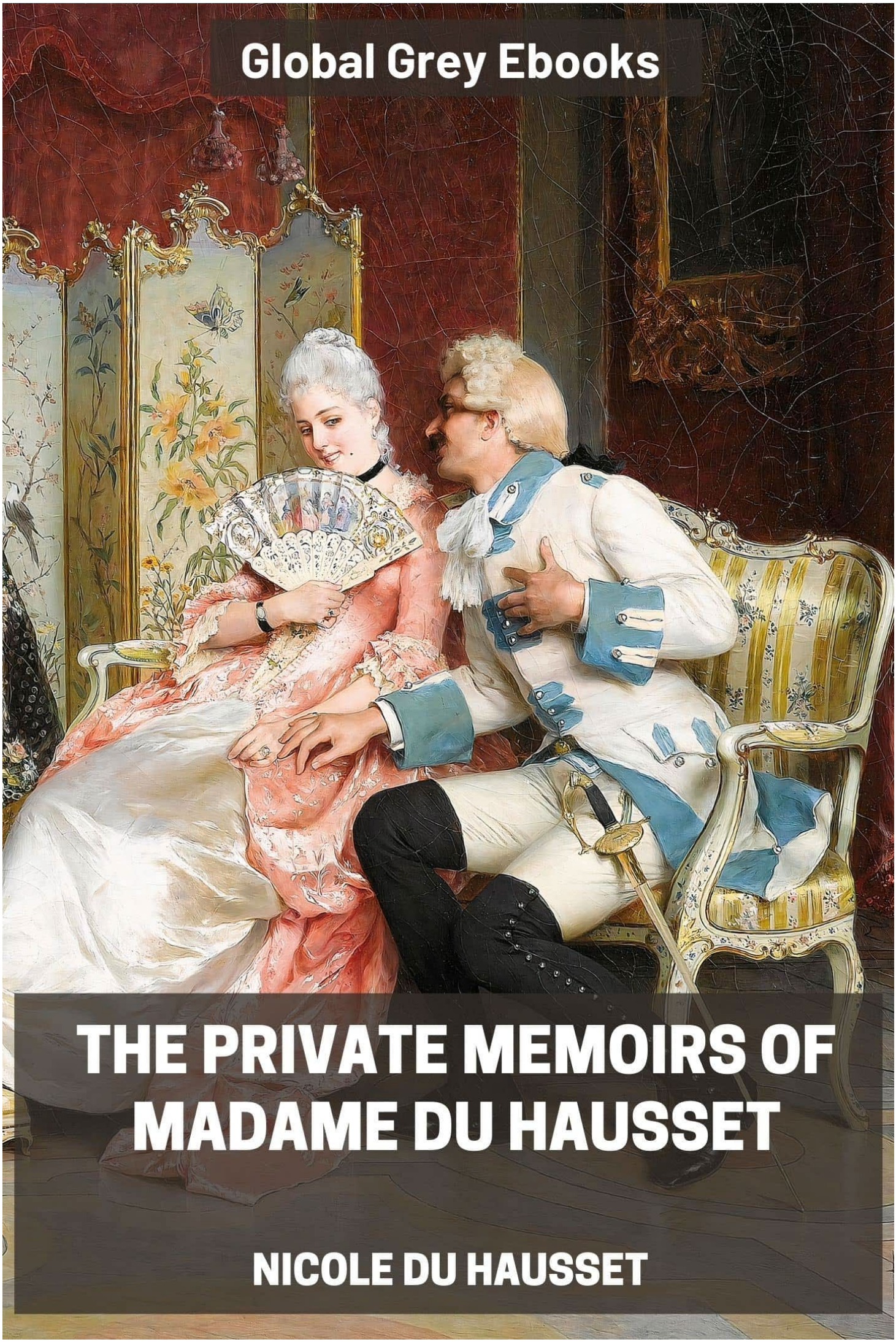

THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS OF MADAME DU HAUSSET

NICOLE DU HAUSSET

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The Private Memoirs of Madame Du Hausset by Nicole du Hausset.
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Advertisement

[FROM THE LONDON MAGAZINE, NO. III. NEW SERIES P. 439.]

We were obliged by circumstances, at one time, to read all the published memoirs relative to the reign of Louis XV., and had the opportunity of reading many others which may not see the light for a long time yet to come, as their publication at present would materially militate against the interest of the descendants of the writers; and we have no hesitation in saying that the Memoirs of Madame du Hausset are the only perfectly sincere ones amongst all those we know. Sometimes, Madame du Hausset mistakes, through ignorance, but never does she wilfully mislead, like Madame Campan, nor keep back a secret, like Madame Roland, and MM. Bezenval and Ferreires; nor is she ever betrayed by her vanity to invent, like the Due de Lauzun, MM. Talleyrand, Bertrand de Moleville, Marmontel, Madame d'Epinay, etc. When Madame du Hausset is found in contradiction with other memoirs of the same period, we should never hesitate to give her account the preference. Whoever is desirous of accurately knowing the reign of Louis XV. should run over the very wretched history of Lacretelle, merely for the dates, and afterwards read the two hundred pages of the naive du Hausset, who, in every half page, overturns half a dozen misstatements of this hollow rhetorician. Madame du Hausset was often separated from the little and obscure chamber in the Palace of Versailles, where resided the supreme power, only by a slight door or curtain, which permitted her to hear all that was said there. She had for a 'cher ami' the greatest practical philosopher of that period, Dr. Quesnay, the founder of political economy. He was physician to Madame de Pompadour, and one of the sincerest and most single-hearted of men probably in Paris at the time. He explained to Madame du Hausset many things that, but for his assistance, she would have witnessed without understanding.

Introduction

A friend of M. de Marigny (the brother of Madame de Pompadour) called on him one day and found him burning papers. Taking up a large packet which he was going to throw into the fire “This,” said he, “is the journal of a waiting-woman of my sister’s. She was a very estimable person, but it is all gossip; to the fire with it!” He stopped, and added, “Don’t you think I am a little like the curate and the barber burning Don Quixote’s romances?”—“I beg for mercy on this,” said his friend. “I am fond of anecdotes, and I shall be sure to find some here which will interest me.” “Take it, then,” said M. de Marigny, and gave it him.

The handwriting and the spelling of this journal are very bad. It abounds in tautology and repetitions. Facts are sometimes inverted in the order of time; but to remedy all these defects it would have been necessary to recast the whole, which would have completely changed the character of the work. The spelling and punctuation were, however, corrected in the original, and some explanatory notes added.

Madame de Pompadour had two waiting-women of good family. The one, Madame du Hausset, who did not change her name; and another, who assumed a name, and did not publicly announce her quality. This journal is evidently the production of the former.

The amours of Louis XV. were, for a long time, covered with the veil of mystery. The public talked of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, but were acquainted with none of its details. Louis XIV., who, in the early part of his reign, had endeavoured to conceal his attachments, towards the close of it gave them a publicity which in one way increased the scandal; but his mistresses were all women of quality, entitled by their birth to be received at Court. Nothing can better describe the spirit of the time and the character of the Monarch than these words of Madame de Montespan:

“He does not love me,” said she, “but he thinks he owes it to his subjects and to his own greatness to have the most beautiful woman in his kingdom as his mistress.”

Secret Memoirs Of Louis XV.,
And Memoirs Of Madame Du Hausset

An early friend of mine, who married well at Paris, and who has the reputation of being a very clever woman, has often asked me to write down what daily passed under my notice; to please her, I made little notes, of three or four lines each, to recall to my memory the most singular or interesting facts; as, for instance—attempt to assassinate the King; he orders Madame de Pompadour to leave the Court; M. de Machaudt's ingratitude, etc.—I always promised my friend that I would, some time or other, reduce all these materials into the form of a regular narrative. She mentioned the "Recollections of Madame de Caylus," which were, however, not then printed; and pressed me so much to produce a similar work, that I have taken advantage of a few leisure moments to write this, which I intend to give her, in order that she may arrange it and correct the style. I was for a long time about the person of Madame de Pompadour, and my birth procured for me respectful treatment from herself, and from some distinguished persons who conceived a regard for me. I soon became the intimate friend of Doctor Quesnay, who frequently came to pass two or three hours with me.

His house was frequented by people of all parties, but the number was small, and restricted to those who were on terms of greatest intimacy with him. All subjects were handled with the utmost freedom, and it is infinitely to his honour and theirs that nothing was ever repeated.

The Countess D——- also visited me. She was a frank and lively woman, and much liked by Madame de Pompadour. The Baschi family paid me great attention. M. de Marigny had received some little services from me, in the course of the frequent quarrels between him and his sister, and he had a great friendship for me. The King was in the constant habit of seeing me; and an accident, which I shall have occasion to relate, rendered him very familiar with me. He talked without any constraint when I was in the room. During Madame de Pompadour's illness I scarcely ever left her chamber, and passed the night there. Sometimes, though rarely, I accompanied her in her carriage with Doctor Quesnay, to whom she scarcely spoke a word, though he was—a man of great talents. When I was alone with her, she talked of many affairs which nearly concerned her, and she once said to me, "The King and I have such implicit confidence in you, that we look upon you as a cat, or a dog, and go on talking as if you were not there." There was a little nook, adjoining her chamber, which has since been altered, where she knew I usually sat when I was alone, and where I heard everything that was said in the room, unless it was spoken in a low voice. But when the King wanted to speak to her in private, or in the presence of any of his Ministers, he went with her into a closet, by the side of the chamber, whither she also retired when she had secret business with the Ministers, or with other important persons; as, for instance, the Lieutenant of Police, the Postmaster-General, etc. All these circumstances brought to my knowledge a great many things which probity will neither allow me to tell or to record. I generally wrote without order of time, so that a fact may be related before others which preceded it. Madame de Pompadour had a great friendship for three Ministers; the first was M. de Machault, to whom she was indebted for the regulation of her income, and the payment of her debts. She gave him the seals, and he retained the first place in her regard till the attempt to assassinate the King. Many people said that his conduct on that occasion was not attributable to bad intentions; that he thought it his duty to obey the King without making himself in any way a party to the affair, and that his cold manners gave him the appearance of an indifference which he did not feel. Madame de Pompadour regarded him in the light of a faithless friend; and, perhaps,

there was some justice on both sides. But for the Abbe de Bernis; M. de Machault might, probably, have retained his place.

The second Minister, whom Madame de Pompadour liked, was the Abbe de Bernis. She was soon disgusted with him when she saw the absurdity of his conduct. He gave a singular specimen of this on the very day of his dismissal. He had invited a great many people of distinction to a splendid entertainment, which was to have taken place on the very day when he received his order of banishment, and had written in the notes of invitation—M. Le Comte de Lusace will be there. This Count was the brother of the Dauphine, and this mention of him was deservedly thought impertinent. The King said, wittily enough, "Lambert and Moliere will be there." She scarcely ever spoke of the Cardinal de Bernis after his dismissal from the Court.

He was extremely ridiculous, but he was a good sort of man. Madame, the Infanta, died a little time before, and, by the way, of such a complication of putrid and malignant diseases, that the Capuchins who bore the body, and the men who committed it to the grave, were overcome by the effluvia. Her papers appeared no less impure in the eyes of the King. He discovered that the Abbe de Bernis had been intriguing with her, and that they had deceived him, and had obtained the Cardinal's hat by making use of his name. The King was so indignant that he was very near refusing him the barrette. He did grant it—but just as he would have thrown a bone to a dog. The Abbe had always the air of a protege when he was in the company of Madame de Pompadour. She had known him in positive distress. The Due de Choiseul was very differently situated; his birth, his air, his manners, gave him claims to consideration, and he far exceeded every other man in the art of ingratiating himself with Madame de Pompadour. She looked upon him as one of the most illustrious nobles of the Court, as the most able Minister, and the most agreeable man. M. de Choiseul had a sister and a wife, whom he had introduced to her, and who sedulously cultivated her favourable sentiments towards him. From the time he was Minister, she saw only with his eyes; he had the talent of amusing her, and his manners to women, generally, were extremely agreeable.

Two persons—the Lieutenant of Police and the Postmaster-General—were very much in Madame de Pompadour's confidence; the latter, however, became less necessary to her from the time that the King communicated to M. de Choiseul the secret of the post-office, that is to say, the system of opening letters and extracting matter from them: this had never been imparted to M. d'Argenson, in spite of the high favour he enjoyed. I have heard that M. de Choiseul abused the confidence reposed in him, and related to his friends the ludicrous stories, and the love affairs, contained in the letters which were broken open. The plan they pursued, as I have heard, was very simple. Six or seven clerks of the post-office picked out the letters they were ordered to break open, and took the impression of the seals with a ball of quicksilver. Then they put each letter, with the seal downwards, over a glass of hot water, which melted the wax without injuring the paper. It was then opened, the desired matter extracted, and it was sealed again, by means of the impression. This is the account of the matter I have heard. The Postmaster-General carried the extracts to the King on Sundays. He was seen coming and going on this noble errand as openly as the Ministers. Doctor Quesnay often, in my presence, flew in such a rage about that infamous Minister, as he called him, that he foamed at the mouth. "I would as soon dine with the hangman as with the Postmaster-General," said the Doctor. It must be acknowledged that this was astonishing language to be uttered in the apartments of the King's mistress; yet it went on for twenty years without being talked of. "It was probity speaking with earnestness," said M. de Marigny, "and not a mere burst of spite or malignity."

The Duc de Gontaut was the brother-in-law and friend of M. de Choiseul, and was assiduous in his attendance on Madame de Pompadour. The sister of M. de Choiseul, Madame de Grammont, and his wife were equally constant in their attentions. This will sufficiently account for the ascendency of M. de Choiseul, whom nobody would have ventured to attack. Chance, however, discovered to me a secret correspondence of the King, with a man in a very obscure station. This man, who had a place in the Farmers General, of from two to three hundred a year, was related to one of the young ladies of the Parc-aux-cerfs, by whom he was recommended to the King. He was also connected in some way with M. de Broglie, in whom the King placed great confidence. Wearied with finding that this correspondence procured him no advancement, he took the resolution of writing to me, and requesting an interview, which I granted, after acquainting Madame de Pompadour with the circumstance. After a great deal of preamble and of flattery, he said to me, “Can you give me your word of honour, and that of Madame de Pompadour, that no mention whatever of what I am going to tell you will be made to the King?”—“I think I can assure you that, if you require such a promise from Madame de Pompadour, and if it can produce no ill consequence to the King’s service, she will give it you.” He gave me his word that what he requested would have no bad effect; upon which I listened to what he had to say. He shewed me several memorials, containing accusations of M. de Choiseul, and revealed some curious circumstances relative to the secret functions of the Comte de Broglie. These, however, led rather to conjectures than to certainty, as to the nature of the services he rendered to the King. Lastly, he shewed me several letters in the King’s handwriting. “I request,” said he, “that the Marquise de Pompadour will procure for me the place of Receiver-General of Finances; I will give her information of whatever I send the King; I will write according to her instructions, and I will send her his answers.” As I did not choose to take liberties with the King’s papers, I only undertook to deliver the memorials. Madame de Pompadour having given me her word according to the conditions on which I had received the communication, I revealed to her everything I had heard. She sent the memorials to M. de Choiseul, who thought them very maliciously and very cleverly written. Madame de Pompadour and he had a long conference as to the reply that was to be given to the person by whom those disclosures were made. What I was commissioned to say was this: that the place of Receiver-General was at present too important, and would occasion too much surprise and speculation; that it would not do to go beyond a place worth fifteen thousand to twenty thousand francs a year; that they had no desire to pry into the King’s secrets; and that his correspondence ought not to be communicated to any one; that this did not apply to papers like those of which I was the bearer, which might fall into his hands; that he would confer an obligation by communicating them, in order that blows aimed in the dark, and directed by malignity and imposture, might be parried. The answer was respectful and proper, in what related to the King; it was, however, calculated to counteract the schemes of the Comte de Broglie, by making M. de Choiseul acquainted with his attacks, and with the nature of the weapons he employed. It was from the Count that he received statements relating to the war and to the navy; but he had no communication with him concerning foreign affairs, which the Count, as it was said, transacted immediately with the King. The Duc de Choiseul got the man who spoke to me recommended to the Controller-General, without his appearing in the business; he had the place which was agreed upon, and the hope of a still better, and he entrusted to me the King’s correspondence, which I told him I should not mention to Madame de Pompadour, according to her injunctions. He sent several memorials to M. de Choiseul, containing accusations of him, addressed to the King. This timely information enabled him to refute them triumphantly.

The King was very fond of having little private correspondences, very often unknown to Madame de Pompadour: she knew, however, of the existence of some, for he passed part of his mornings in writing to his family, to the King of Spain, to Cardinal Tencin, to the Abbe

de Broglie, and also to some obscure persons. “It is, doubtless, from such people as these,” said she to me, one day, “that the King learns expressions which perfectly surprise me. For instance, he said to me yesterday, when he saw a man pass with an old coat on, ‘il y a la un habit bien examine.’ He once said to me, when he meant to express that a thing was probable, ‘il y a gros’; I am told this is a saying of the common people, meaning, ‘il y a gros a parier’.” I took the liberty to say, “But is it not more likely from his young ladies at the Parc, that he learns these elegant expressions?” She laughed, and said, “You are right; ‘il y a gros’.” The King, however, used these expressions designedly, and with a laugh.

The King knew a great many anecdotes, and there were people enough who furnished him with such as were likely to mortify the self-love of others. One day, at Choisy, he went into a room where some people were employed about embroidered furniture, to see how they were going on; and looking out of the window, he saw at the end of a long avenue two men in the Choisy uniform. “Who are those two noblemen?” said he. Madame de Pompadour took up her glass, and said, “They are the Duc d’Aumont, and ———” “Ah!” said the King; “the Duc d’Aumont’s grandfather would be greatly astonished if he could see his grandson arm in arm with the grandson of his valet de chambre, L———, in a dress which may be called a patent of nobility!” He went on to tell Madame de Pompadour a long history, to prove the truth of what he said. The King went out to accompany her into the garden; and, soon after, Quesnay and M. de Marigny came in. I spoke with contempt of some one who was very fond of money. At this the Doctor laughed, and said, “I had a curious dream last night: I was in the country of the ancient Germans; I had a large house, stacks of corn, herds of cattle, a great number of horses, and huge barrels of ale; but I suffered dreadfully from rheumatism, and knew not how to manage to go to a fountain, at fifty leagues’ distance, the waters of which would cure me. I was to go among a strange people. An enchanter appeared before me, and said to me, ‘I pity your distress; here, I will give you a little packet of the powder of “prelinpinpin”; whoever receives a little of this from you will lodge you, feed you, and pay you all sorts of civilities.’ I took the powder, and thanked him.” “Ah!” said I, “how I should like to have some powder of prelinpinpin! I wish I had a chest full.”—“Well,” said the Doctor, “that powder is money, for which you have so great a contempt. Tell me who, of all the men who come hither, receives the greatest attentions?”—“I do not know,” said I. “Why,” said he, “it is M. de Monmartel, who comes four or five times a year.”—“Why does he enjoy so much consideration?”—“Because his coffers are full of the powder of prelinpinpin. Everything in existence,” said he, taking a handful of Louis from his pocket, “is contained in these little pieces of metal, which will convey you commodiously from one end of the world to the other. All men obey those who possess this powder, and eagerly tender them their services. To despise money, is to despise happiness, liberty, in short, enjoyments of every kind.” A cordon bleu passed under the window. “That nobleman,” said I, “is much more delighted with his cordon bleu than he would be with ten thousand of your pieces of metal.”—“When I ask the King for a pension,” replied Quesnay, “I say to him, ‘Give me the means of having a better dinner, a warmer coat, a carriage to shelter me from the weather, and to transport me from place to place without fatigue.’ But the man who asks him for that fine blue ribbon would say, if he had the courage and the honesty to speak as he feels, ‘I am vain, and it will give me great satisfaction to see people look at me, as I pass, with an eye of stupid admiration, and make way, for me; I wish, when I enter a room, to produce an effect, and to excite the attention of those who may, perhaps, laugh at me when I am gone; I wish to be called Monseigneur by the multitude.’ Is not all this mere empty air? In scarcely any country will this ribbon be of the slightest use to him; it will give him no power. My pieces of metal will give me the power of assisting the unfortunate everywhere. Long live the omnipotent powder of prelinpinpin!” At these last words, we heard a burst of laughter from the adjoining room, which was only separated by a door from the one we were in. The door

opened, and in came the King, Madame de Pompadour, and M. de Gontaut. “Long live the powder of prelinpinpin!” said the King. “Doctor, can you get me any of it?” It happened that, when the King returned from his walk, he was struck with a fancy to listen to our conversation. Madame de Pompadour was extremely kind to the Doctor, and the King went out laughing, and talking with great admiration of the powder. I went away, and so did the Doctor. I immediately sat down to commit this conversation to writing. I was afterwards told that M. Quesnay was very learned in certain matters relating to finance, and that he was a great ‘economiste’. But I do not know very well what that means. What I do know for certain is, that he was very clever, very gay and witty, and a very able physician.

The illness of the little Duke of Burgundy, whose intelligence was much talked of, for a long time occupied the attention of the Court. Great endeavours were made to find out the cause of his malady, and ill-nature went so far as to assert that his nurse, who had an excellent situation at Versailles, had communicated to him a nasty disease. The King shewed Madame de Pompadour the information he had procured from the province she came from, as to her conduct. A silly Bishop thought proper to say she had been very licentious in her youth. The poor nurse was told of this, and begged that he might be made to explain himself. The Bishop replied, that she had been at several balls in the town in which she lived, and that she had gone with her neck uncovered. The poor man actually thought this the height of licentiousness. The King, who had been at first uneasy, when he came to this, called out, “What a fool!” After having long been a source of anxiety to the Court, the Duke died. Nothing produces a stronger impression upon Princes, than the spectacle of their equals dying. Everybody is occupied about them while ill—but as soon as they are dead, nobody mentions them. The King frequently talked about death—and about funerals, and places of burial. Nobody could be of a more melancholy temperament. Madame de Pompadour once told me that he experienced a painful sensation whenever he was forced to laugh, and that he had often begged her to break off a droll story. He smiled, and that was all. In general, he had the most gloomy ideas concerning almost all events. When there was a new Minister, he used to say, “He displays his wares like all the rest, and promises the finest things in the world, not one of which will be fulfilled. He does not know this country—he will see.” When new projects for reinforcing the navy were laid before him, he said, “This is the twentieth time I have heard this talked of—France never will have a navy, I think.” This I heard from M. de Marigny.

I never saw Madame de Pompadour so rejoiced as at the taking of Mahon. The King was very glad, too, but he had no belief in the merit of his courtiers—he looked upon their success as the effect of chance. Marechal Saxe was, as I have been told, the only man who inspired him with great esteem. But he had scarcely ever seen him in his closet, or playing the courtier.

M. d’Argenson picked a quarrel with M. de Richelieu, after his victory, about his return to Paris. This was intended to prevent his coming to enjoy his triumph. He tried to throw the thing upon Madame de Pompadour, who was enthusiastic about him, and called him by no other name than the “Minorcan.” The Chevalier de Montaign was the favourite of the Dauphin, and much beloved by him for his great devotion. He fell ill, and underwent an operation called ‘l’empieme’, which is performed by making an incision between the ribs, in order to let out the pus; it had, to all appearance, a favourable result, but the patient grew worse, and could not breathe. His medical attendants could not conceive what occasioned this accident and retarded his cure. He died almost in the arms of the Dauphin, who went every day to see him. The singularity of his disease determined the surgeons to open the body, and they found, in his chest, part of the leaden syringe with which decoctions had, as was usual, been injected into the part in a state of suppuration. The surgeon, who committed this act of negligence, took care not to boast of his feat, and his patient was the victim. This incident

was much talked of by the King, who related it, I believe, not less than thirty times, according to his custom; but what occasioned still more conversation about the Chevalier de Montaign, was a box, found by his bed's side, containing haircloths, and shirts, and whips, stained with blood. This circumstance was spoken of one evening at supper, at Madame de Pompadour's, and not one of the guests seemed at all tempted to imitate the Chevalier. Eight or ten days afterwards, the following tale was sent to the King, to Madame de Pompadour, to the Baschi, and to the Duc d'Ayen. At first nobody could understand to what it referred: at last, the Duc d'Ayen exclaimed, "How stupid we are; this is a joke on the austerities of the Chevalier de Montaign!" This appeared clear enough—so much the more so, as the copies were sent to the Dauphin, the Dauphine, the Abbe de St. Cyr, and to the Duc de V—-. The latter had the character of a pretender to devotion, and, in his copy, there was this addition, "You would not be such a fool, my dear Duke, as to be a 'faquir'—confess that you would be very glad to be one of those good monks who lead such a jolly life." The Duc de Richelieu was suspected of having employed one of his wits to write the story. The King was scandalised at it, and ordered the Lieutenant of Police to endeavour to find out the author, but either he could not succeed or he would not betray him.

Japanese Tale.

At a distance of three leagues from the capital of Japan, there is a temple celebrated for the concourse of persons, of both sexes, and of all ranks, who crowd thither to worship an idol believed to work miracles. Three hundred men consecrated to the service of religion, and who can give proofs of ancient and illustrious descent, serve this temple, and present to the idol the offerings which are brought from all the provinces of the empire. They inhabit a vast and magnificent edifice, belonging to the temple, and surrounded with gardens where art has combined with nature to produce enchantment. I obtained permission to see the temple, and to walk in the gardens. A monk advanced in years, but still full of vigour and vivacity, accompanied me. I saw several others, of different ages, who were walking there. But what surprised me was to see a great many of them amusing themselves by various agreeable and sportive games with young girls elegantly dressed, listening to their songs, and joining in their dances. The monk, who accompanied me, listened with great civility and kindness to the questions I put to him concerning his order. The following is the sum of his answers to my numerous interrogations. The God Faraki, whom we worship, is so called from a word which signifies the fabricator. He made all that we behold—the earth, the stars, the sun, etc. He has endowed men with senses, which are so many sources of pleasure, and we think the only way of shewing our gratitude is to use them. This opinion will, doubtless, appear to you much more rational than that of the faquirs of India, who pass their lives in thwarting nature, and who inflict upon themselves the most melancholy privations and the most severe sufferings.

As soon as the sun rises, we repair to the mountain you see before us, at the foot of which flows a stream of the most limpid water, which meanders in graceful windings through that meadow-enamelled with the loveliest flowers. We gather the most fragrant of them, which we carry and lay upon the altar, together with various fruits, which we receive from the bounty of Faraki. We then sing his praises, and execute dances expressive of our thankfulness, and of all the enjoyments we owe to this beneficent deity. The highest of these is that which love produces, and we testify our ardent gratitude by the manner in which we avail ourselves of this inestimable gift of Faraki. Having left the temple, we go into several shady thickets, where we take a light repast; after which, each of us employs himself in some unoppressive labour. Some embroider, others apply themselves to painting, others cultivate flowers or fruits, others turn little implements for our use. Many of these little works are sold to the people, who purchase them with eagerness. The money arising from this sale forms a considerable part of our revenue. Our morning is thus devoted to the worship of God and to

the exercise of the sense of Sight, which begins with the first rays of the sun. The sense of Taste is gratified by our dinner, and we add to it the pleasure of Smell. The most delicious viands are spread for us in apartments strewed with flowers. The table is adorned with them, and the most exquisite wines are handed to us in crystal goblets. When we have glorified God, by the agreeable use of the palate, and the olfactory nerve, we enjoy a delightful sleep of two hours, in bowers of orange trees, roses, and myrtles. Having acquired a fresh store of strength and spirits, we return to our occupations, that we may thus mingle labour with pleasure, which would lose its zest by long continuance. After our work, we return to the temple, to thank God, and to offer him incense. From thence we go to the most delightful part of the garden, where we find three hundred young girls, some of whom form lively dances with the younger of our monks; the others execute serious dances, which require neither strength nor agility, and which only keep time to the sound of musical instruments.

We talk and laugh with our companions, who are dressed in a light gauze, and whose tresses are adorned with flowers; we press them to partake of exquisite sherbets, differently prepared. The hour of supper being arrived, we repair to rooms illuminated with the lustre of a thousand tapers fragrant with amber. The supper-room is surrounded by three vast galleries, in which are placed musicians, whose various instruments fill the mind with the most pleasurable and the softest emotions. The young girls are seated at table with us, and, towards the conclusion of the repast, they sing songs, which are hymns in honour of the God who has endowed us with senses which shed such a charm over existence, and which promise us new pleasure from every fresh exercise of them. After the repast is ended, we return to the dance, and, when the hour of repose arrives, we draw from a kind of lottery, in which every one is sure of a prize; that is, a young girl as his companion for the night. They are allotted thus by chance, in order to avoid jealousy, and to prevent exclusive attachments. Thus ends the day, and gives place to a night of delights, which we sanctify by enjoying with due relish that sweetest of all pleasures, which Faraki has so wisely attached to the reproduction of our species. We reverently admire the wisdom and the goodness of Faraki, who, desiring to secure to the world a continued population, has implanted in the sexes an invincible mutual attraction, which constantly draws them towards each other. Fecundity is the end he proposes, and he rewards with intoxicating delights those who contribute to the fulfilment of his designs. What should we say to the favourite of a King from whom he had received a beautiful house, and fine estates, and who chose to spoil the house, to let it fall in ruins, to abandon the cultivation of the land, and let it become sterile, and covered with thorns? Such is the conduct of the faquirs of India, who condemn themselves to the most melancholy privations, and to the most severe sufferings. Is not this insulting Faraki? Is it not saying to him, I despise your gifts? Is it not misrepresenting him and saying, You are malevolent and cruel, and I know that I can no otherwise please you than by offering you the spectacle of my miseries? “I am told,” added he, “that you have, in your country, faquirs not less insane, not less cruel to themselves.” I thought, with some reason, that he meant the fathers of La Trappe. The recital of the matter afforded me much matter for reflection, and I admired how strange are the systems to which perverted reason gives birth.

The Duc de V——- was a nobleman of high rank and great wealth. He said to the King one evening at supper, “Your Majesty does me the favour to treat me with great kindness: I should be inconsolable if I had the misfortune to fall under your displeasure. If such a calamity were to befall me, I should endeavour to divert my grief by improving some beautiful estates of mine in such and such a province;” and he thereupon gave a description of three or four fine seats. About a month after, talking of the disgrace of a Minister, he said, “I hope your Majesty will not withdraw your favour from me; but if I had the misfortune to lose it, I should be more to be pitied than anybody, for I have no asylum in which to hide my

head." All those present, who had heard the description of the beautiful country houses, looked at each other and laughed. The King said to Madame de Pompadour, who sat next to him at table, "People are very right in saying that a liar ought to have a good memory."

An event, which made me tremble, as well as Madame, procured me the familiarity of the King. In the middle of the night, Madame came into my chamber, en chemise, and in a state of distraction. "Here! Here!" said she, "the King is dying." My alarm may be easily imagined. I put on a petticoat, and found the King in her bed, panting. What was to be done?—it was an indigestion. We threw water upon him, and he came to himself. I made him swallow some Hoffman's drops, and he said to me, "Do not make any noise, but go to Quesnay; say that your mistress is ill; and tell the Doctor's servants to say nothing about it." Quesnay, who lodged close by, came immediately, and was much astonished to see the King in that state. He felt his pulse, and said, "The crisis is over; but, if the King were sixty years old, this might have been serious." He went to seek some drug, and, on his return, set about inundating the King with perfumed water. I forget the name of the medicine he made him take, but the effect was wonderful. I believe it was the drops of General Lamotte. I called up one of the girls of the wardrobe to make tea, as if for myself. The King took three cups, put on his robe de chambre and his stockings, and went to his own room, leaning upon the Doctor. What a sight it was to see us all three half naked! Madame put on a robe as soon as possible, and I did the same, and the King changed his clothes behind the curtains, which were very decently closed. He afterwards spoke of this short attack, and expressed his sense of the attentions shown him. An hour after, I felt the greatest possible terror in thinking that the King might have died in our hands. Happily, he quickly recovered himself, and none of the domestics perceived what had taken place. I merely told the girl of the wardrobe to put everything to rights, and she thought it was Madame who had been indisposed. The King, the next morning, gave secretly to Quesnay a little note for Madame, in which he said, 'Ma chere amie' must have had a great fright, but let her reassure herself—I am now well, which the Doctor will certify to you. From that moment the King became accustomed to me, and, touched by the interest I had shown for him, he often gave me one of his peculiarly gracious glances, and made me little presents, and, on every New Year's Day, sent me porcelain to the amount of twenty louis d'or. He told Madame that he looked upon me in the apartment as a picture or statue, and never put any constraint upon himself on account of my presence. Doctor Quesnay received a pension of a thousand crowns for his attention and silence, and the promise of a place for his son. The King gave me an order upon the Treasury for four thousand francs, and Madame had presented to her a very handsome chiming-clock and the King's portrait in a snuffbox.

The King was habitually melancholy, and liked everything which recalled the idea of death, in spite of the strongest fears of it. Of this, the following is an instance: Madame de Pompadour was on her way to Crecy, when one of the King's grooms made a sign to her coachman to stop, and told him that the King's carriage had broken down, and that, knowing her to be at no great distance, His Majesty had sent him forward to beg her to wait for him. He soon overtook us, and seated himself in Madame de Pompadour's carriage, in which were, I think, Madame de Chateau-Renaud, and Madame de Mirepoix. The lords in attendance placed themselves in some other carriages. I was behind, in a chaise, with Gourbillon, Madame de Pompadour's valet de chambre. We were surprised in a short time by the King stopping his carriage. Those which followed, of course stopped also. The King called a groom, and said to him, "You see that little eminence; there are crosses; it must certainly be a burying-ground; go and see whether there are any graves newly dug." The groom galloped up to it, returned, and said to the King, "There are three quite freshly made."

Madame de Pompadour, as she told me, turned away her head with horror; and the little Marechale gaily said, “This is indeed enough to make one’s mouth water.”[1]

Madame de Pompadour spoke of it when I was undressing her in the evening. “What a strange pleasure,” said she, “to endeavour to fill one’s mind with images which one ought to endeavour to banish, especially when one is surrounded by so many sources of happiness! But that is the King’s way; he loves to talk about death. He said, some days ago, to M. de Fontanieu, who was, seized with a bleeding at the nose, at the levee: ‘Take care of yourself; at your age it is a forerunner of apoplexy.’ The poor man went home frightened, and absolutely ill.”

I never saw the King so agitated as during the illness of the Dauphin. The physicians came incessantly to the apartments of Madame de Pompadour, where the King interrogated them. There was one from Paris, a very odd man, called Pousse, who once said to him, “You are a good papa; I like you for that. But you know we are all your children, and share your distress. Take courage, however; your son will recover.” Everybody’s eyes were upon the Duc d’Orleans, who knew not how to look. He would have become heir to the crown, the Queen being past the age to have children. Madame de ——- said to me, one day, when I was expressing my surprise at the King’s grief, “It would annoy him beyond measure to have a Prince of the blood heir apparent. He does not like them, and looks upon their relationship to him as so remote, that he would feel humiliated by it.” And, in fact, when his son recovered, he said, “The King of Spain would have had a fine chance.” It was thought that he was right in this, and that it would have been agreeable to justice; but that, if the Duc d’Orleans had been supported by a party, he might have supported his pretensions to the crown. It was, doubtless, to remove this impression that he gave a magnificent fete at St. Cloud on the occasion of the Dauphin’s recovery. Madame de Pompadour said to Madame de Brancas, speaking of this fete, “He wishes to make us forget the chateau en Espagne he has been dreaming of; in Spain, however, they build them of solider materials.” The people did not shew so much joy at the Dauphin’s recovery. They looked upon him as a devotee, who did nothing but sing psalms. They loved the Duc d’Orleans, who lived in the capital, and had acquired the name of the King of Paris. These sentiments were not just; the Dauphin only sang psalms when imitating the tones of one of the choristers of the chapel. The people afterwards acknowledged their error, and did justice to his virtues. The Duc d’Orleans paid the most assiduous court to Madame de Pompadour: the Duchess, on the contrary, detested her. It is possible that words were put into the Duchess’s mouth which she never uttered; but she, certainly, often said most cutting things. The King would have sent her into exile, had he listened only to his resentment; but he feared the eclat of such a proceeding, and he knew that she would only be the more malicious. The Duc d’Orleans was, just then, extremely jealous of the Comte de Melfort; and the Lieutenant of Police told the King he had strong reasons for believing that the Duke would stick at nothing to rid himself of this gallant, and that he thought it his duty to give the Count notice, that he ought to be upon his guard. The King said, “He would not dare to attempt any such violence as you seem to apprehend; but there is a better way: let him try to surprise them, and he will find me very well inclined to have his cursed wife shut up; but if he got rid of this lover, she would have another to-morrow.

[1] *The Marechale de Mirepois died at Brussels in 1791, at a very advanced age, but preserving her wit and gaiety to the last. The day of her death, after she had received the Sacrament, the physician told her that he thought her a good deal better. She replied, “You tell me bad news: having packed up, I had rather go.” She was sister of the Prince de Beauveau. The Prince de Ligne says, in one of his printed letters: “She had that enchanting talent which supplies the means of pleasing everybody. You would have sworn that she had thought of nothing but you all her life.”—En.*

“Nay, she has others at this moment; for instance, the Chevalier de Colbert, and the Comte de l’Aigle.” Madame de Pompadour, however, told me these two last affairs were not certain.

An adventure happened about the same time, which the Lieutenant of Police reported to the King. The Duchesse d’Orleans had amused herself one evening, about eight o’clock, with ogling a handsome young Dutchman, whom she took a fancy to, from a window of the Palais Royal. The young man, taking her for a woman of the town, wanted to make short work, at which she was very much shocked. She called a Swiss, and made herself known. The stranger was arrested; but he defended himself by affirming that she had talked very loosely to him. He was dismissed, and the Duc d’Orleans gave his wife a severe reprimand.

The King (who hated her so much that he spoke of her without the slightest restraint) one day said to Madame de Pompadour, in my presence, “Her mother knew what she was, for, before her marriage, she never suffered her to say more than yes and no. Do you know her joke on the nomination of Moras? She sent to congratulate him upon it: two minutes after, she called back the messenger she had sent, and said, before everybody present, ‘Before you speak to him, ask the Swiss if he still has the place.’” Madame de Pompadour was not vindictive, and, in spite of the malicious speeches of the Duchesse d’Orleans, she tried to excuse her conduct. “Almost all women,” she said, “have lovers; she has not all that are imputed to her: but her free manners, and her conversation, which is beyond all bounds, have brought her into general disrepute.”

My companion came into my room the other day, quite delighted. She had been with M. de Chenevieres, first Clerk in the War-office, and a constant correspondent of Voltaire, whom she looks upon as a god. She was, by the bye, put into a great rage one day, lately, by a print-seller in the street, who was crying, “Here is Voltaire, the famous Prussian; here you see him, with a great bear-skin cap, to keep him from the cold! Here is the famous Prussian, for six sous!”—“What a profanation!” said she. To return to my story: M. de Chenevieres had shewn her some letters from Voltaire, and M. Marmontel had read an ‘Epistle to his Library’.

M. Quesnay came in for a moment; she told him all this: and, as he did not appear to take any great interest in it, she asked him if he did not admire great poets. “Oh, yes; just as I admire great bilboquet players,” said he, in that tone of his, which rendered everything he said diverting. “I have written some verses, however,” said he, “and I will repeat them to you; they are upon a certain M. Rodot, an Intendant of the Marine, who was very fond of abusing medicine and medical men. I made these verses to revenge AEsculapius and Hippocrates.

“What do you say to them?” said the Doctor. My companion thought them very pretty, and the Doctor gave me them in his handwriting, begging me, at the same time, not to give any copies.

Madame de Pompadour joked my companion about her ‘bel-esprit’, but sometimes she reposed confidence in her. Knowing that she was often writing, she said to her, “You are writing a novel, which will appear some day or other; or, perhaps, the age of Louis XV.: I beg you to treat me well.” I have no reason to complain of her. It signifies very little to me that she can talk more learnedly than I can about prose and verse.

She never told me her real name; but one day I was malicious enough to say to her, “Some one was maintaining, yesterday, that the family of Madame de Mar—— was of more importance than many of good extraction. They say it is the first in Cadiz. She had very honourable alliances, and yet she has thought it no degradation to be governess to Madame de Pompadour’s daughter. One day you will see her sons or her nephews Farmers General, and her granddaughters married to Dukes.” I had remarked that Madame de Pompadour for some days had taken chocolate, ‘a triple vanille et ambre’, at her breakfast; and that she ate truffles

and celery soup: finding her in a very heated state, I one day remonstrated with her about her diet, to which she paid no attention. I then thought it right to speak to her friend, the Duchesse de Brancas. “I had remarked the same thing,” said she, “and I will speak to her about it before you.” After she was dressed, Madame de Brancas, accordingly, told her she was uneasy about her health. “I have just been talking to her about it,” said the Duchess, pointing to me, “and she is of my opinion.” Madame de Pompadour seemed a little displeased; at last, she burst into tears. I immediately went out, shut the door, and returned to my place to listen. “My dear friend,” she said to Madame de Brancas, “I am agitated by the fear of losing the King’s heart by ceasing to be attractive to him. Men, you know, set great value on certain things, and I have the misfortune to be of a very cold temperament. I, therefore, determined to adopt a heating diet, in order to remedy this defect, and for two days this elixir has been of great service to me, or, at least, I have thought I felt its good effects.”

The Duchesse de Brancas took the phial which was upon the toilet, and after having smelt at it, “Fie!” said she, and threw it into the fire. Madame de Pompadour scolded her, and said, “I don’t like to be treated like a child.” She wept again, and said, “You don’t know what happened to me a week ago. The King, under pretext of the heat of the weather, lay down upon my sofa, and passed half the night there. He will take a disgust to me and have another mistress.”—“You will not avoid that,” replied the Duchess, “by following your new diet, and that diet will kill you; render your company more and more precious to the King by your gentleness: do not repulse him in his fond moments, and let time do the rest; the chains of habit will bind him to you for ever.” They then embraced; Madame de Pompadour recommended secrecy to Madame de Brancas, and the diet was abandoned.

A little while after, she said to me, “Our master is better pleased with me. This is since I spoke to Quesnay, without, however, telling him all. He told me, that to accomplish my end, I must try to be in good health, to digest well, and, for that purpose, take exercise. I think the Doctor is right. I feel quite a different creature. I adore that man (the King), I wish so earnestly to be agreeable to him! But, alas! sometimes he says I am a macreuse (a cold-blooded aquatic bird). I would give my life to please him.”

One day, the King came in very much heated. I withdrew to my post, where I listened. “What is the matter?” said Madame de Pompadour. “The long robes and the clergy,” replied he, “are always at drawn daggers, they distract me by their quarrels. But I detest the long robes the most. My clergy, on the whole, is attached and faithful to me; the others want to keep me in a state of tutelage.”—“Firmness,” said Madame de Pompadour, “is the only thing that can subdue them.”—“Robert Saint Vincent is an incendiary, whom I wish I could banish, but that would make a terrible tumult. On the other hand, the Archbishop is an iron-hearted fellow, who tries to pick quarrels. Happily, there are some in the Parliament upon whom I can rely, and who affect to be very violent, but can be softened upon occasion. It costs me a few abbeys, and a few secret pensions, to accomplish this. There is a certain V—- who serves me very well, while he appears to be furious on the other side.”—“I can tell you some news of him, Sire,” said Madame de Pompadour. “He wrote to me yesterday, pretending that he is related to me, and begging for an interview.”—“Well,” said the King, “let him come. See him; and if he behaves well, we shall have a pretext for giving him something.” M. de Gontaut came in, and seeing that they were talking seriously, said nothing. The King walked about in an agitated manner, and suddenly exclaimed, “The Regent was very wrong in restoring to them the right of remonstrating; they will end in ruining the State.”—“All, Sire,” said M. de Gontaut, “it is too strong to be shaken by a set of petty justices.” “You don’t know what they do, nor what they think. They are an assembly of republicans; however, here is enough of the subject. Things will last as they are as long as I shall. Talk about this on Sunday, Madame, with M. Berrien.” Madame d’Amblimont and Madame d’Esparbes came

in. “Ah! here come my kittens,” said Madame de Pompadour; “all that we are about is Greek to them; but their gaiety restores my tranquility, and enables me to attend again to serious affairs. You, Sire, have the chase to divert you—they answer the same purpose to me.” The King then began to talk about his morning’s sport, and Lansmatte.[2]

It was necessary to let the King go on upon these subjects, and even, sometimes, to hear the same story three or four times over, if new persons came into the room. Madame de Pompadour never betrayed the least ennui. She even sometimes persuaded him to begin his story anew.

I one day said to her, “It appears to me, Madame, that you are fonder than ever of the Comtesse d’Amblimont.”—“I have reason to be so,” said she. “She is unique, I think, for her fidelity to her friends, and for her honour. Listen, but tell nobody—four days ago, the King, passing her to go to supper, approached her, under the pretence of tickling her, and tried to slip a note into her hand. D’Amblimont, in her madcap way, put her hands behind her back, and the King was obliged to pick up the note, which had fallen on the ground. Gontaut was the only person who saw all this, and, after supper, he went up to the little lady, and said, ‘You are an excellent friend.’—‘I did my duty,’ said she, and immediately put her finger on her lips to enjoin him to be silent. He, however, informed me of this act of friendship of the little heroine, who had not told me of it herself.” I admired the Countess’s virtue, and Madame de Pompadour said, “She is giddy and headlong; but she has more sense and more feeling than a thousand prudes and devotees. D’Esparbes would not do as much most likely she would meet him more than half-way. The King appeared disconcerted, but he still pays her great attentions.”—“You will, doubtless, Madame,” said I, “show your sense of such admirable conduct.”—“You need not doubt it,” said she, “but I don’t wish her to think that I am informed of it.” The King, prompted either by the remains of his liking, or from the suggestions of Madame de Pompadour, one morning went to call on Madame d’Amblimont, at Choisy, and threw round her neck a collar of diamonds and emeralds, worth between fifty thousand and seventy-five thousand francs. This happened a long time after the circumstance I have just related.

There was a large sofa in a little room adjoining Madame de Pompadour’s, upon which I often reposed.

One evening, towards midnight, a bat flew into the apartment where the Court was; the King immediately cried out, “Where is General Crillon?” (He had just left the room.) “He is the General to command against the bats.” This set everybody calling out, “Ou etais tu, Crillon?” M. de Crillon soon after came in, and was told where the enemy was. He immediately threw off his coat, drew his sword, and commenced an attack upon the bat, which flew into the closet where I was fast asleep. I started out of sleep at the noise, and saw the King and all the company around me. This furnished amusement for the rest of the evening. M. de Crillon was a very excellent and agreeable man, but he had the fault of indulging in buffooneries of this kind, which, however, were the result of his natural gaiety, and not of any subserviency of character. Such, however, was not the case with another exalted nobleman, a Knight of the Golden Fleece, whom Madame saw one day shaking hands with her valet de chambre. As he was one of the vainest men at Court, Madame could not refrain from telling the circumstance to the King; and, as he had no employment at Court, the King scarcely ever after named him on the Supper List.

[2] *See the “Memoirs of Madame Campan,” vol. iii., p. 24. Many traits of original and amusing bluntness are related of Lansmatte, one of the King’s grooms.*

I had a cousin at Saint Cyr, who was married. She was greatly distressed at having a relation waiting woman to Madame de Pompadour, and often treated me in the most mortifying manner. Madame knew this from Colin, her steward, and spoke of it to the King. “I am not surprised at it,” said he; “this is a specimen of the silly women of Saint Cyr. Madame de Maintenon had excellent intentions, but she made a great mistake. These girls are brought up in such a manner, that, unless they are all made ladies of the palace, they are unhappy and impertinent.”

Some time after, this relation of mine was at my house. Colin, who knew her, though she did not know him, came in. He said to me, “Do you know that the Prince de Chimay has made a violent attack upon the Chevalier d’Henin for being equerry to the Marquise.” At these words, my cousin looked very much astonished, and said, “Was he not right?”—“I don’t mean to enter into that question,” said Colin—“but only to repeat his words, which were these: ‘If you were only a man of moderately good family and poor, I should not blame you, knowing, as I do, that there are hundreds such, who would quarrel for your place, as young ladies of family would, to be about your mistress. But, recollect, that your relations are princes of the Empire, and that you bear their name.”—“What, sir,” said my relation, “the Marquise’s equerry of a princely house?”—“Of the house of Chimay,” said he; “they take the name of Alsace “—witness the Cardinal of that name. Colin went out delighted at what he had said.

“I cannot get over my surprise at what I have heard,” said my relation. “It is, nevertheless, very true,” replied I; “you may see the Chevalier d’Henin (that is the family name of the Princes de Chimay), with the cloak of Madame upon his arm, and walking alongside her sedan-chair, in order that he may be ready, on her getting in, to cover her shoulders with her cloak, and then remain in the antechamber, if there is no other room, till her return.”

From that time, my cousin let me alone; nay, she even applied to me to get a company of horse for her husband, who was very loath to come and thank me. His wife wished him to thank Madame de Pompadour; but the fear he had lest she should tell him, that it was in consideration of his relationship to her waiting-woman that he commanded fifty horse, prevented him. It was, however, a most surprising thing that a man belonging to the house of Chimay should be in the service of any lady whatever; and, the commander of Alsace returned from Malta on purpose to get him out of Madame de Pompadour’s household. He got him a pension of a hundred louis from his family, and the Marquise gave him a company of horse. The Chevalier d’Henin had been page to the Marechal de Luxembourg, and one can hardly imagine how he could have put his relation in such a situation; for, generally speaking, all great houses keep up the consequence of their members. M. de Machault, the Keeper of the Seals, had, at the same time, as equerry, a Knight of St. Louis, and a man of family—the Chevalier de Peribuse—who carried his portfolio, and walked by the side of the chair.

Whether it was from ambition, or from tenderness, Madame de Pompadour had a regard for her daughter,—[The daughter of Madame de Pompadour and her husband, M. d’Atioles. She was called Alexandrine.]—which seemed to proceed from the bottom of her heart. She was brought up like a Princess, and, like persons of that rank, was called by her Christian name alone. The first persons at Court had an eye to this alliance, but her mother had, perhaps, a better project. The King had a son by Madame de Vintimille, who resembled him in face, gesture, and manners. He was called the Comte du ——-. Madame de Pompadour had him brought: to Bellevue. Colin, her steward, was employed to find means to persuade his tutor to bring him thither. They took some refreshment at the house of the Swiss, and the Marquise, in the course of her walk, appeared to meet them by accident. She asked the name of the child, and admired his beauty. Her daughter came up at the same moment, and Madame de

Pompadour led them into a part of the garden where she knew the King would come. He did come, and asked the child's name. He was told, and looked embarrassed when Madame, pointing to them, said they would be a beautiful couple. The King played with the girl, without appearing to take any notice of the boy, who, while he was eating some figs and cakes which were brought, his attitudes and gestures were so like those of the King, that Madame de Pompadour was in the utmost astonishment. "Ah!" said she, "Sire, look at ——— ———." —"At what?" said he. "Nothing," replied Madame, "except that one would think one saw his father."

"I did not know," said the King, smiling, "that you were so intimately acquainted with the Comte du L——— ."—"You ought to embrace him," said she, "he is very handsome."—"I will begin, then, with the young lady," said the King, and embraced them in a cold, constrained manner. I was present, having joined Mademoiselle's governess. I remarked to Madame, in the evening, that the King had not appeared very cordial in his caresses. "That is his way," said she; "but do not those children appear made for each other? If it was Louis XIV., he would make a Duc du Maine of the little boy; I do not ask so much; but a place and a dukedom for his son is very little; and it is because he is his son that I prefer him to all the little Dukes of the Court. My grandchildren would blend the resemblance of their grandfather and grandmother; and this combination, which I hope to live to see, would, one day, be my greatest delight." The tears came into her eyes as she spoke. Alas! alas! only six months elapsed, when her darling daughter, the hope of her advanced years, the object of her fondest wishes, died suddenly. Madame de Pompadour was inconsolable, and I must do M. de Marigny the justice to say that he was deeply afflicted. His niece was beautiful as an angel, and destined to the highest fortunes, and I always thought that he had formed the design of marrying her. A dukedom would have given him rank; and that, joined to his place, and to the wealth which she would have had from her mother, would have made him a man of great importance. The difference of age was not sufficient to be a great obstacle. People, as usual, said the young lady was poisoned; for the unexpected death of persons who command a large portion of public attention always gives birth to these rumours. The King shewed great regret, but more for the grief of Madame than on account of the loss itself, though he had often caressed the child, and loaded her with presents. I owe it, also, to justice, to say that M. de Marigny, the heir of all Madame de Pompadour's fortune, after the death of her daughter, evinced the sincerest and deepest regret every time she was seriously ill. She, soon after, began to lay plans for his establishment. Several young ladies of the highest birth were thought of; and, perhaps, he would have been made a Duke, but his turn of mind indisposed him for schemes either of marriage or ambition. Ten times he might have been made Prime Minister, yet he never aspired to it. "That is a man," said Quesnay to me, one day, "who is very little known; nobody talks of his talents or acquirements, nor of his zealous and efficient patronage of the arts: no man, since Colbert, has done so much in his situation: he is, moreover, an extremely honourable man, but people will not see in him anything but the brother of the favourite; and, because he is fat, he is thought dull and heavy." This was all perfectly true. M. de Marigny had travelled in Italy with very able artists, and had acquired taste, and much more information than any of his predecessors had possessed. As for the heaviness of his air, it only came upon him when he grew fat; before that, he had a delightful face. He was then as handsome as his sister. He paid court to nobody, had no vanity, and confined himself to the society of persons with whom he was at his ease. He went rather more into company at Court after the King had taken him to ride with him in his carriage, thinking it then his duty to shew himself among the courtiers.

Madame called me, one day, into her closet, where the King was walking up and down in a very serious mood. "You must," said she, "pass some days in a house in the Avenue de St.

Cloud, whither I shall send you. You will there find a young lady about to lie in." The King said nothing, and I was mute from astonishment. "You will be mistress of the house, and preside, like one of the fabulous goddesses, at the accouchement. Your presence is necessary, in order that everything may pass secretly, and according to the King's wish. You will be present at the baptism, and name the father and mother." The King began to laugh, and said, "The father is a very honest man;" Madame added, "beloved by every one, and adored by those who know him." Madame then took from a little cupboard a small box, and drew from it an aigrette of diamonds, at the same time saying to the King, "I have my reasons for it not being handsomer."—"It is but too much so," said the King; "how kind you are;" and he then embraced Madame, who wept with emotion, and, putting her hand upon the King's heart, said, "This is what I wish to secure." The King's eyes then filled with tears, and I also began weeping, without knowing why. Afterwards, the King said, "Guimard will call upon you every day, to assist you with his advice, and at the critical moment you will send for him. You will say that you expect the sponsors, and a moment after you will pretend to have received a letter, stating that they cannot come. You will, of course, affect to be very much embarrassed; and Guimard will then say that there is nothing for it but to take the first comers. You will then appoint as godfather and godmother some beggar, or chairman, and the servant girl of the house, and to whom you will give but twelve francs, in order not to attract attention."—"A louis," added Madame, "to obviate anything singular, on the other hand."—"It is you who make me economical, under certain circumstances," said the King. "Do you remember the driver of the fiacre? I wanted to give him a LOUIS, and Duc d'Ayen said, 'You will be known;' so that I gave him a crown." He was going to tell the whole story. Madame made a sign to him to be silent, which he obeyed, not without considerable reluctance. She afterwards told me that at the time of the fetes given on occasion of the Dauphin's marriage, the King came to see her at her mother's house in a hackney-coach. The coachman would not go on, and the King would have given him a LOUIS. "The police will hear of it, if you do," said the Duc d'Ayen, "and its spies will make inquiries, which will, perhaps, lead to a discovery."

"Guimard," continued the King, "will tell you the names of the father and mother; he will be present at the ceremony, and make the usual presents. It is but fair that you also should receive yours;" and, as he said this, he gave me fifty LOUIS, with that gracious air that he could so well assume upon certain occasions, and which no person in the kingdom had but himself. I kissed his hand and wept. "You will take care of the accouchee, will you not? She is a good creature, who has not invented gunpowder, and I confide her entirely to your direction; my chancellor will tell you the rest," he said, turning to Madame, and then quitted the room. "Well, what think you of the part I am playing?" asked Madame. "It is that of a superior woman, and an excellent friend," I replied. "It is his heart I wish to secure," said she; "and all those young girls who have no education will not run away with it from me. I should not be equally confident were I to see some fine woman belonging to the Court, or the city, attempt his conquest."

I asked Madame, if the young lady knew that the King was the father of her child? "I do not think she does," replied she; "but, as he appeared fond of her, there is some reason to fear that those about her might be too ready to tell her; otherwise," said she, shrugging her shoulders, "she, and all the others, are told that he is a Polish nobleman, a relation of the Queen, who has apartments in the castle." This story was contrived on account of the cordon bleu, which the King has not always time to lay aside, because, to do that, he must change his coat, and in order to account for his having a lodging in the castle so near the King. There were two little rooms by the side of the chapel, whither the King retired from his apartment, without being seen by anybody but a sentinel, who had his orders, and who did not know who passed

through those rooms. The King sometimes went to the Parc-aux-cerfs, or received those young ladies in the apartments I have mentioned.

I must here interrupt my narrative, to relate a singular adventure, which is only known to six or seven persons, masters or valets. At the time of the attempt to assassinate the King, a young girl, whom he had seen several times, and for whom he had manifested more tenderness than for most, was distracted at this horrible event. The Mother-Abbess of the Parc-aux-cerfs perceived her extraordinary grief, and managed so as to make her confess that she knew the Polish Count was the King of France. She confessed that she had taken from his pocket two letters, one of which was from the King of Spain, the other from the Abbe de Brogue. This was discovered afterwards, for neither she nor the Mother-Abbess knew the names of the writers. The girl was scolded, and M. Lebel, first valet de chambre, who had the management of all these affairs, was called; he took the letters, and carried them to the King, who was very much embarrassed in what manner to meet a person so well informed of his condition. The girl in question, having perceived that the King came secretly to see her companion, while she was neglected, watched his arrival, and, at the moment he entered with the Abbess, who was about to withdraw, she rushed distractedly into the room where her rival was. She immediately threw herself at the King's feet. "Yes," said she, "you are King of all France; but that would be nothing to me if you were not also monarch of my heart: do not forsake me, my beloved sovereign; I was nearly mad when your life was attempted!" The Mother-Abbess cried out, "You are mad now." The King embraced her, which appeared to restore her to tranquility. They succeeded in getting her out of the room, and a few days afterwards the unhappy girl was taken to a madhouse, where she was treated as if she had been insane, for some days. But she knew well enough that she was not so, and that the King had really been her lover. This lamentable affair was related to me by the Mother-Abbess, when I had some acquaintance with her at the time of the accouchement I have spoken of, which I never had before, nor since.

To return to my history: Madame de Pompadour said to me, "Be constantly with the 'accouchee', to prevent any stranger, or even the people of the house, from speaking to her. You will always say that he is a very rich Polish nobleman, who is obliged to conceal himself on account of his relationship to the Queen, who is very devout. You will find a wet-nurse in the house, to whom you will deliver the child. Guimard will manage all the rest. You will go to church as a witness; everything must be conducted as if for a substantial citizen. The young lady expects to lie in in five or six days; you will dine with her, and will not leave her till she is in a state of health to return to the Parc-aux-cerfs, which she may do in a fortnight, as I imagine, without running any risk." I went, that same evening, to the Avenue de Saint Cloud, where I found the Abbess and Guimard, an attendant belonging to the castle, but without his blue coat. There were, besides, a nurse, a wet-nurse, two old men-servants, and a girl, who was something between a servant and a waiting-woman. The young lady was extremely pretty, and dressed very elegantly, though not too remarkably. I supped with her and the Mother-Abbess, who was called Madame Bertrand. I had presented the aigrette Madame de Pompadour gave me before supper, which had greatly delighted the young lady, and she was in high spirits.

Madame Bertrand had been housekeeper to M. Lebel, first valet de chambre to the King. He called her Dominique, and she was entirely in his confidence. The young lady chatted with us after supper; she appeared to be very naive. The next day, I talked to her in private. She said to me, "How is the Count?" (It was the King whom she called by this title.) "He will be very sorry not to be with me now; but he was obliged to set off on a long journey." I assented to what she said. "He is very handsome," said she, "and loves me with all his heart. He promised me an allowance; but I love him disinterestedly; and, if he would let me, I would

follow him to Poland." She afterwards talked to me about her parents, and about M. Lebel, whom she knew by the name of Durand. "My mother," said she, "kept a large grocer's shop, and my father was a man of some consequence; he belonged to the Six Corps, and that, as everybody knows, is an excellent thing. He was twice very near being head-bailiff." Her mother had become bankrupt at her father's death, but the Count had come to her assistance, and settled upon her fifteen hundred francs a year, besides giving her six thousand francs down. On the sixth day, she was brought to bed, and, according to my instructions, she was told the child was a girl, though in reality it was a boy; she was soon to be told that it was dead, in order that no trace of its existence might remain for a certain time. It was eventually to be restored to its mother. The King gave each of his children about ten thousand francs a year. They inherited after each other as they died off, and seven or eight were already dead. I returned to Madame de Pompadour, to whom I had written every day by Guimard. The next day, the King sent for me into the room; he did not say a word as to the business I had been employed upon; but he gave me a large gold snuff-box, containing two rouleaux of twenty-five louis each. I curtsied to him, and retired. Madame asked me a great many questions of the young lady, and laughed heartily at her simplicity, and at all she had said about the Polish nobleman. "He is disgusted with the Princess, and, I think, will return to Poland for ever, in two months."—"And the young lady?" said I. "She will be married in the country," said she, "with a portion of forty thousand crowns at the most and a few diamonds." This little adventure, which initiated me into the King's secrets, far from procuring for me increased marks of kindness from him, seemed to produce a coldness towards me; probably because he was ashamed of my knowing his obscure amours. He was also embarrassed by the services Madame de Pompadour had rendered him on this occasion.

Besides the little mistresses of the Parc-aux-cerfs, the King had sometimes intrigues with ladies of the Court, or from Paris, who wrote to him. There was a Madame de L——-, who, though married to a young and amiable man, with two hundred thousand francs a year, wished absolutely to become his mistress. She contrived to have a meeting with him: and the King, who knew who she was, was persuaded that she was really madly in love with him. There is no knowing what might have happened, had she not died. Madame was very much alarmed, and was only relieved by her death from inquietude. A circumstance took place at this time which doubled Madame's friendship for me. A rich man, who had a situation in the Revenue Department, called on me one day very secretly, and told me that he had something of importance to communicate to Madame la Marquise, but that he should find himself very much embarrassed in communicating it to her personally, and that he should prefer acquainting me with it. He then told me, what I already knew, that he had a very beautiful wife, of whom he was passionately fond; that having on one occasion perceived her kissing a little 'porte feuille', he endeavoured to get possession of it, supposing there was some mystery attached to it. One day that she suddenly left the room to go upstairs to see her sister, who had been brought to bed, he took the opportunity of opening the porte feuille, and was very much surprised to find in it a portrait of the King, and a very tender letter written by His Majesty. Of the latter he took a copy, as also of an unfinished letter of his wife, in which she vehemently entreated the King to allow her to have the pleasure of an interview—the means she pointed out. She was to go masked to the public ball at Versailles, where His Majesty could meet her under favour of a mask. I assured M. de ——— that I should acquaint Madame with the affair, who would, no doubt, feel very grateful for the communication. He then added, "Tell Madame la Marquise that my wife is very clever and very intriguing. I adore her, and should run distracted were she to be taken from me." I lost not a moment in acquainting Madame with the affair, and gave her the letter. She became serious and pensive, and I since learned that she consulted M. Berrier, Lieutenant of Police, who, by a very simple but ingeniously conceived plan, put an end to the designs of this lady. He demanded an

audience of the King, and told him that there was a lady in Paris who was making free with His Majesty's name; that he had been given the copy of a letter, supposed to have been written by His Majesty to the lady in question. The copy he put into the King's hands, who read it in great confusion, and then tore it furiously to pieces. M. Berrier added, that it was rumoured that this lady was to meet His Majesty at the public ball, and, at this very moment, it so happened that a letter was put into the King's hand, which proved to be from the lady, appointing the meeting; at least, M. Berrier judged so, as the King appeared very much surprised on reading it, and said, "It must be allowed, M. le Lieutenant of Police, that you are well informed." M. Berrier added, "I think it my duty to tell Your Majesty that this lady passes for a very intriguing person." "I believe," replied the King, "that it is not without deserving it that she has got that character."

Madame de Pompadour had many vexations in the midst of all her grandeur. She often received anonymous letters, threatening her with poison or assassination: her greatest fear, however, was that of being supplanted by a rival. I never saw her in a greater agitation than, one evening, on her return from the drawing-room at Marly. She threw down her cloak and muff, the instant she came in, with an air of ill-humour, and undressed herself in a hurried manner. Having dismissed her other women, she said to me, "I think I never saw anybody so insolent as Madame de Coaslin. I was seated at the same table with her this evening, at a game of 'brelan', and you cannot imagine what I suffered. The men and women seemed to come in relays to watch us. Madame de Coaslin said two or three times, looking at me, 'Va tout', in the most insulting manner. I thought I should have fainted, when she said, in a triumphant tone, I have the 'brelan' of kings. I wish you had seen her courtesy to me on parting."—"Did the King," said I, "show her particular attention?" "You don't know him," said she; "if he were going to lodge her this very night in my apartment, he would behave coldly to her before people, and would treat me with the utmost kindness. This is the effect of his education, for he is, by nature, kind-hearted and frank." Madame de Pompadour's alarms lasted for some months, when she, one day, said to me, "That haughty Marquise has missed her aim; she frightened the King by her grand airs, and was incessantly teasing him for money. Now you, perhaps, may not know that the King would sign an order for forty thousand LOUIS without a thought, and would give a hundred out of his little private treasury with the greatest reluctance. Lebel, who likes me better than he would a new mistress in my place, either by chance or design had brought a charming little sultana to the Parc-aux-cerfs, who has cooled the King a little towards the haughty Vashti, by giving him occupation, has received a hundred thousand francs, some jewels, and an estate. Jannette—[The Intendant of Police.]—has rendered me great service, by showing the King extracts from the letters broken open at the post-office, concerning the report that Madame de Coaslin was coming into favour: The King was much impressed by a letter from an old counsellor of the Parliament, who wrote to one of his friends as follows: 'It is quite as reasonable that the King should have a female friend and confidante—as that we, in our several degrees, should so indulge ourselves; but it is desirable that he should keep the one he has; she is gentle, injures nobody, and her fortune is made. The one who is now talked of will be as haughty as high birth can make her. She must have an allowance of a million francs a year, since she is said to be excessively extravagant; her relations must be made Dukes, Governors of provinces, and Marshals, and, in the end, will surround the King, and overawe the Ministers.'"

Madame de Pompadour had this passage, which had been sent to her by M. Jannette, the Intendant of the Police, who enjoyed the King's entire confidence. He had carefully watched the King's look, while he read the letter, and he saw that the arguments of this counsellor, who was not a disaffected person, made a great impression upon him. Some time afterwards, Madame de Pompadour said to me, "The haughty Marquise behaved like Mademoiselle

Deschamps[3], and she is turned off." This was not Madame's only subject of alarm. A relation of Madame d'Estrades[4], wife to the Marquis de C——, had made the most pointed advances to the King, much more than were necessary for a man who justly thought himself the handsomest man in France, and who was, moreover, a King. He was perfectly persuaded that every woman would yield to the slightest desire he might deign to manifest. He, therefore, thought it a mere matter of course that women fell in love with him. M. de Stainville had a hand in marring the success of that intrigue; and, soon afterwards, the Marquise de C——-, who was confined to her apartments at Marly, by her relations, escaped through a closet to a rendezvous, and was caught with a young man in a corridor. The Spanish Ambassador, coming out of his apartments with flambeaux, was the person who witnessed this scene. Madame d'Estrades affected to know nothing of her cousin's intrigues, and kept up an appearance of the tenderest attachment to Madame de Pompadour, whom she was habitually betraying. She acted as spy for M. d'Argenson, in the cabinets, and in Madame de Pompadour's apartments; and, when she could discover nothing, she had recourse to her invention, in order that she might not lose her importance with her lover. This Madame d'Estrades owed her whole existence to the bounties of Madame, and yet, ugly as she was, she had tried to get the King away from her. One day, when he, had got rather drunk at Choisy (I think, the only time that, ever happened to him), he went on board a beautiful barge, whither Madame, being ill of an indigestion, could not accompany him. Madame d'Estrades seized this opportunity. She got into the barge, and, on their return, as it was dark, she followed the King into a private closet, where he was believed to be sleeping on a couch, and there went somewhat beyond any ordinary advances to him. Her account of the matter to Madame was, that she had gone into the closet upon her own affairs, and that the King, had followed her, and had tried to ravish her. She was at full liberty to make what story she pleased, for the King knew neither what he had said, nor what he had done. I shall finish this subject by a short history concerning a young lady. I had been, one day, to the theatre at Compiegne. When I returned, Madame asked me several questions about the play; whether there was much company, and whether I did not see a very beautiful girl. I replied, "That there was, indeed, a girl in a box near mine, who was surrounded by all the young men about the Court." She smiled, and said, "That is Mademoiselle Dorothee; she went, this evening, to see the King sup in public, and to-morrow she is to be taken to the hunt. You are surprised to find me so well informed, but I know a great deal more about her. She was brought here by a Gascon, named Dubarre or Dubarri, who is the greatest scoundrel in France. He founds all his hopes of advancement on Mademoiselle Dorothee's charms, which he thinks the King cannot resist. She is, really, very beautiful.. She was pointed out to me in my little garden, whither she was taken to walk on purpose. She is the daughter of a water-carrier, at Strasbourg, and her charming lover demands to be sent Minister to Cologne, as a beginning."—"Is it possible, Madame, that you can have been rendered uneasy by such a creature as that?"—"Nothing is impossible," replied she; "though I think the King would scarcely dare to give such a scandal. Besides, happily, Lebel, to quiet his conscience, told the King that the beautiful Dorothee's lover is infected with a horrid disease;" and, added he, "Your Majesty would not get rid of

[3] *A courtesan, distinguished for her charms, and still more so for an extraordinary proof of patriotism. At a time when the public Treasury was exhausted, Mademoiselle Deschamps sent all her plate to the Mint. Louis XIV. boasted of this act of generous devotion to her country. The Duc d'Ayen made it the subject of a pleasantry, which detracted nothing from the merit of the sacrifice—but which is rather too gay for us to venture upon.*

[4] *The Comtesse d'Estrades, a relative of M. Normand, and a flatterer of Madame de Pompadour, who brought her to Court, was secretly in the pay of the Comte d'Argenson. That Minister, who did not disdain la Fillon, from whom he extracted useful information, knew all that passed at the Court of the favourite, by means of Madame d'Estrades, whose ingratitude and perfidiousness he liberally paid.*

that as you have done of the scrofula." This was quite enough to keep the young lady at a distance.

"I pity you sincerely, Madame," said I, "while everybody else envies you." "Ah!" replied she, "my life is that of the Christian, a perpetual warfare. This was not the case with the woman who enjoyed the favour of Louis XIV. Madame de La Valliere suffered herself to be deceived by Madame de Montespan, but it was her own fault, or, rather, the effect of her extreme good nature. She was entirely devoid of suspicion at first, because she could not believe her friend perfidious. Madame de Montespan's empire was shaken by Madame de Fontanges, and overthrown by Madame de Maintenon; but her haughtiness, her caprices, had already alienated the King. He had not, however, such rivals as mine; it is true, their baseness is my security. I have, in general, little to fear but casual infidelities, and the chance that they may not all be sufficiently transitory for my safety. The King likes variety, but he is also bound by habit; he fears eclats, and detests manoeuvring women. The little Marechale (de Mirepoig) one day said to me, 'It is your staircase that the King loves; he is accustomed to go up and down it. But, if he found another woman to whom he could talk of hunting and business as he does to you, it would be just the same to him in three days.'"

I write without plan, order, or date, just as things come into my mind; and I shall now go to the Abbe de Bernis, whom I liked very much, because he was good-natured, and treated me kindly. One day, just as Madame de Pompadour had finished dressing, M. de Noailles asked to speak to her in private. I, accordingly, retired. The Count looked full of important business. I heard their conversation, as there was only the door between us.

"A circumstance has taken place," said he, "which I think it my duty to communicate to the King; but I would not do so without first informing you of it, since it concerns one of your friends for whom I have the utmost regard and respect. The Abbe de Bernis had a mind to shoot, this morning, and went, with two or three of his people, armed with guns, into the little park, where the Dauphin would not venture to shoot without asking the King's permission. The guards, surprised at hearing the report of guns, ran to the spot, and were greatly astonished at the sight of M. de Bernis. They very respectfully asked to see his permission, when they found, to their astonishment, that he had none. They begged of him to desist, telling him that, if they did their duty, they should arrest him; but they must, at all events, instantly acquaint me with the circumstance, as Ranger of the Park of Versailles. They added, that the King must have heard the firing, and that they begged of him to retire. The Abbe apologized, on the score of ignorance, and assured them that he had my permission. 'The Comte de Noailles,' said they, 'could only grant permission to shoot in the more remote parts, and in the great park.'" The Count made a great merit of his eagerness to give the earliest information to Madame. She told him to leave the task of communicating it to the King to her, and begged of him to say nothing about the matter. M. de Marigny, who did not like the Abbe, came to see me in the evening; and I affected to know nothing of the story, and to hear it for the first time from him. "He must have been out of his senses," said he, "to shoot under the King's windows,"—and enlarged much on the airs he gave himself. Madame de Pompadour gave this affair the best colouring she could the King was, nevertheless, greatly disgusted at it, and twenty times, since the Abbe's disgrace, when he passed over that part of the park, he said, "This is where the Abbe took his pleasure." The King never liked him; and Madame de Pompadour told me one night, after his disgrace, when I was sitting up with her in her illness, that she saw, before he had been Minister a week, that he was not fit for his office. "If that hypocritical Bishop," said she, speaking of the Bishop of Mirepoix, "had not prevented the King from granting him a pension of four hundred louis a year, which he had promised me, he would never have been appointed Ambassador. I should, afterwards, have been able to give him an income of eight hundred louis a year, perhaps the place of master of

the chapel. Thus he would have been happier, and I should have had nothing to regret." I took the liberty of saying that I did not agree with her. That he had yet remaining advantages, of which he could not be deprived; that his exile would terminate; and that he would then be a Cardinal, with an income of eight thousand louis a year. "That is true," she replied; "but I think of the mortifications he has undergone, and of the ambition which devours him; and, lastly, I think of myself. I should have still enjoyed his society, and should have had, in my declining years, an old and amiable friend, if he had not been Minister." The King sent him away in anger, and was strongly inclined to refuse him the hat. M. Quesnay told me, some months afterwards, that the Abbe wanted to be Prime Minister; that he had drawn up a memorial, setting forth that in difficult crises the public good required that there should be a central point (that was his expression), towards which everything should be directed. Madame de Pompadour would not present the memorial; he insisted, though she said to him, "You will rain yourself." The King cast his eyes over it, and said "'central point,'—that is to say himself, he wants to be Prime Minister." Madame tried to apologize for him, and said, "That expression might refer to the Marechal de Belle-Isle."—"Is he not just about to be made Cardinal?" said the King. "This is a fine manoeuvre; he knows well enough that, by means of that dignity, he would compel the Ministers to assemble at his house, and then M. l'Abbe would be the central point. Wherever there is a Cardinal in the council, he is sure, in the end, to take the lead. Louis XIV., for this reason, did not choose to admit the Cardinal de Janson into the council, in spite of his great esteem for him. The Cardinal de Fleury told me the same thing. He had some desire that the Cardinal de Tencin should succeed him; but his sister was such an intrigante that Cardinal de Fleury advised me to have nothing to do with the matter, and I behaved so as to destroy all his hopes, and to undeceive others. M. d'Argenson has strongly impressed me with the same opinion, and has succeeded in destroying all my respect for him." This is what the King said, according to my friend Quesnay, who, by the bye, was a great genius, as everybody said, and a very lively, agreeable man. He liked to chat with me about the country. I had been bred up there, and he used to set me a talking about the meadows of Normandy and Poitou, the wealth of the farmers, and the modes of culture. He was the best-natured man in the world, and the farthest removed from petty intrigue. While he lived at Court, he was much more occupied with the best manner of cultivating land than with anything that passed around him. The man whom he esteemed the most was M. de la Riviere, a Counsellor of Parliament, who was also Intendant of Martinique; he looked upon him as a man of the greatest genius, and thought him the only person fit for the financial department of administration.

The Comtesse d'Estrades, who owed everything to Madame de Pompadour, was incessantly intriguing against her. She was clever enough to destroy all proofs of her manoeuvres, but she could not so easily prevent suspicion. Her intimate connection with M. d'Argenson gave offence to Madame, and, for some time, she was more reserved with her. She, afterwards, did a thing which justly irritated the King and Madame. The King, who wrote a great deal, had written to Madame de Pompadour a long letter concerning an assembly of the Chambers of Parliament, and had enclosed a letter of M. Berrien. Madame was ill, and laid those letters on a little table by her bedside. M. de Gontaut came in, and gossipped about trifles, as usual. Madame d'Amblimont also came, and stayed but very little time. Just as I was going to resume a book which I had been reading to Madame, the Comtesse d'Estrades entered, placed herself near Madame's bed, and talked to her for some time. As soon as she was gone, Madame called me, asked what was o'clock, and said, "Order my door to be shut, the King will soon be here." I gave the order, and returned; and Madame told me to give her the King's letter, which was on the table with some other papers. I gave her the papers, and told her there was nothing else. She was very uneasy at not finding the letter, and, after enumerating the persons who had been in the room, she said, "It cannot be the little Countess, nor Gontaut,

who has taken this letter. It can only be the Comtesse d'Estrades;—and that is too bad." The King came, and was extremely angry, as Madame told me. Two days afterwards, he sent Madame d'Estrades into exile. There was no doubt that she took the letter; the King's handwriting had probably awakened her curiosity. This occurrence gave great pain to M. d'Argenson, who was bound to her, as Madame de Pompadour said, by his love of intrigue. This redoubled his hatred of Madame, and she accused him of favouring the publication of a libel, in which she was represented as a worn-out mistress, reduced to the vile occupation of providing new objects to please her lover's appetite. She was characterised as superintendent of the Parc-aux-cerfs, which was said to cost hundreds of thousands of louis a year. Madame de Pompadour did, indeed, try to conceal some of the King's weaknesses, but she never knew one of the sultanas of that seraglio. There were, however, scarcely ever more than two at once, and often only one. When they married, they received some jewels, and four thousand louis. The Parc-aux-cerfs was sometimes vacant for five or six months. I was surprised, some time after, at seeing the Duchesse de Luynes, Lady of Honour to the Queen, come privately to see Madame de Pompadour. She afterwards came openly. One evening, after Madame was in bed, she called me, and said, "My dear, you will be delighted; the Queen has given me the place of Lady of the Palace; tomorrow I am to be presented to her: you must make me look well." I knew that the King was not so well pleased at this as she was; he was afraid that it would give rise to scandal, and that it might be thought he had forced this nomination upon the Queen. He had, however, done no such thing. It had been represented to the Queen that it was an act of heroism on her part to forget the past; that all scandal would be obliterated when Madame de Pompadour was seen to belong to the Court in an honourable manner; and that it would be the best proof that nothing more than friendship now subsisted between the King and the favourite. The Queen received her very graciously. The devotees flattered themselves they should be protected by Madame, and, for some time, were full of her praises. Several of the Dauphin's friends came in private to see her, and some obtained promotion. The Chevalier du Muy, however, refused to come. The King had the greatest possible contempt for them, and granted them nothing with a good grace. He, one day, said of a man of great family, who wished to be made Captain of the Guards, "He is a double spy, who wants to be paid on both sides." This was the moment at which Madame de Pompadour seemed to me to enjoy the most complete satisfaction. The devotees came to visit her without scruple, and did not forget to make use of every opportunity of serving themselves. Madame de Lu——- had set them the example. The Doctor laughed at this change in affairs, and was very merry at the expense of the saints. "You must allow, however, that they are consistent," said I, "and may be sincere." "Yes," said he; "but then they should not ask for anything."

One day, I was at Doctor Quesnay's, whilst Madame de Pompadour was at the theatre. The Marquis de Mirabeau came in, and the conversation was, for some time, extremely tedious to me, running entirely on 'net produce'; at length, they talked of other things.[5]

Mirabeau said, "I think the King looks ill, he grows old."—"So much the worse, a thousand times so much the worse," said Quesnay; "it would be the greatest possible loss to France if he died;" and he raised his hands, and sighed deeply. "I do not doubt that you are attached to the King, and with reason," said Mirabeau: "I am attached to him too; but I never saw you so

[5] *The author of "L'Ami des Hommes," one of the leaders of the sect of Economistes, and father of the celebrated Mirabeau. After the death of Quesnay, the Grand Master of the Order, the Marquis de Mirabeau was unanimously elected his successor. Mirabeau was not deficient in a certain enlargement of mind, nor in acquirements, nor even in patriotism; but his writings are enthusiastical, and show that he had little more than glimpses of the truth. The Friend of Man was the enemy of all his family. He beat his servants, and did not pay them. The reports of the lawsuit with his wife, in 1775, prove that this philosopher possessed, in the highest possible degree, all the anti-conjugal qualities. It is said that his eldest son wrote two contradictory depositions, and was paid by both sides.*

much moved."—"Ah!" said Quesnay, "I think of what would follow."—"Well, the Dauphin is virtuous."—"Yes; and full of good intentions; nor is he deficient in understanding; but canting hypocrites would possess an absolute empire over a Prince who regards them as oracles. The Jesuits would govern the kingdom, as they did at the end of Louis XIV.'s reign: and you would see the fanatical Bishop of Verdun Prime Minister, and La Vauguyon all-powerful under some other title. The Parliaments must then mind how they behave; they will not be better treated than my friends the philosophers."—"But they go too far," said Mirabeau; "why openly attack religion?"—"I allow that," replied the Doctor; "but how is it possible not to be rendered indignant by the fanaticism of others, and by recollecting all the blood that has flowed during the last two hundred years? You must not then again irritate them, and revive in France the time of Mary in England. But what is done is done, and I often exhort them to be moderate; I wish they would follow the example of our friend Duclos."—"You are right," replied Mirabeau; "he said to me a few days ago, 'These philosophers are going on at such a rate that they will force me to go to vespers and high mass;' but, in fine, the Dauphin is virtuous, well-informed, and intellectual."—"It is the commencement of his reign, I fear," said Quesnay, "when the imprudent proceedings of our friends will be represented to him in the most unfavourable point of view; when the Jansenists and Molinists will make common cause, and be strongly supported by the Dauphine. I thought that M. de Muy was moderate, and that he would temper the headlong fury of the others; but I heard him say that Voltaire merited condign punishment. Be assured, sir, that the times of John Huss and Jerome of Prague will return; but I hope not to live to see it. I approve of Voltaire having hunted down the Pompignans: were it not for the ridicule with which he covered them, that bourgeois Marquis would have been preceptor to the young Princes, and, aided by his brother, would have succeeded in again lighting the faggots of persecution."—"What ought to give you confidence in the Dauphin," said Mirabeau, "is, that, notwithstanding the devotion of Pompignan, he turns him into ridicule. A short time back, seeing him strutting about with an air of inflated pride, he said to a person, who told it to me, 'Our friend Pompignan thinks that he is something.'" On returning home, I wrote down this conversation.

I, one day, found Quesnay in great distress. "Mirabeau," said he, "is sent to Vincennes, for his work on taxation. The Farmers General have denounced him, and procured his arrest; his wife is going to throw herself at the feet of Madame de Pompadour to-day." A few minutes afterwards, I went into Madame's apartment, to assist at her toilet, and the Doctor came in. Madame said to him, "You must be much concerned at the disgrace of your friend Mirabeau. I am sorry for it too, for I like his brother." Quesnay replied, "I am very far from believing him to be actuated by bad intentions, Madame; he loves the King and the people." "Yes," said she; "his 'Ami des Hommes' did him great honour." At this moment the Lieutenant of Police entered, and Madame said to him, "Have you seen M. de Mirabeau's book?"—"Yes, Madame; but it was not I who denounced it?"—"What do you think of it?"—"I think he might have said almost all it contains with impunity, if he had been more circumspect as to the manner; there is, among other objectionable passages, this, which occurs at the beginning: Your Majesty has about twenty millions of subjects; it is only by means of money that you can obtain their services, and there is no money."—"What, is there really that, Doctor?" said Madame. "It is true, they are the first lines in the book, and I confess that they are imprudent; but, in reading the work, it is clear that he laments that patriotism is extinct in the hearts of his fellow-citizens, and that he desires to rekindle it." The King entered: we went out, and I wrote down on Quesnay's table what I had just heard. I them returned to finish dressing Madame de Pompadour: she said to me, "The King is extremely angry with Mirabeau; but I tried to soften him, and so did the Lieutenant of Police. This will increase Quesnay's fears. Do you know what he said to me to-day? The King had been talking to him in my room, and the Doctor appeared timid and agitated. After the King was gone, I said to him, 'You always

seem so embarrassed in the King's presence, and yet he is so good-natured.'—'I Madame,' said he, 'I left my native village at the age of forty, and I have very little experience of the world, nor can I accustom myself to its usages without great difficulty. When I am in a room with the King, I say to myself, This is a man who can order my head to be cut off; and that idea embarrasses me.'—'But do not the King's justice and kindness set you at ease?'—'That is very true in reasoning,' said he; 'but the sentiment is more prompt, and inspires me with fear before I have time to say to myself all that is calculated to allay it.'"

I got her to repeat this conversation, and wrote it down immediately, that I might not forget it.

An anonymous letter was addressed to the King and Madame de Pompadour; and, as the author was very anxious that it should not miscarry, he sent copies to the Lieutenant of Police, sealed and directed to the King, to Madame de Pompadour, and to M. de Marigny. This letter produced a strong impression on Madame, and on the King, and still more, I believe, on the Duc de Choiseul, who had received a similar one. I went on my knees to M. de Marigny, to prevail on him to allow me to copy it, that I might show it to the Doctor. It is as follows:

"Sire—It is a zealous servant who writes to Your Majesty. Truth is always better, particularly to Kings; habituated to flattery, they see objects only under those colours most likely to please them. I have reflected, and read much; and here is what my meditations have suggested to me to lay before Your Majesty. They have accustomed you to be invisible, and inspired you with a timidity which prevents you from speaking; thus all direct communication is cut off between the master and his subjects. Shut up in the interior of your palace, you are becoming every day like the Emperors of the East; but see, Sire, their fate! 'I have troops,' Your Majesty will say; such, also, is their support: but, when the only security of a King rests upon his troops; when he is only, as one may say, a King of the soldiers, these latter feel their own strength, and abuse it. Your finances are in the greatest disorder, and the great majority of states have perished through this cause. A patriotic spirit sustained the ancient states, and united all classes for the safety of their country. In the present times, money has taken the place of this spirit; it has become the universal lever, and you are in want of it. A spirit of finance affects every department of the state; it reigns triumphant at Court; all have become venal; and all distinction of rank is broken up. Your Ministers are without genius and capacity since the dismissal of MM. d'Argenson and de Machault. You alone cannot judge of their incapacity, because they lay before you what has been prepared by skilful clerks, but which they pass as their own. They provide only for the necessity of the day, but there is no spirit of government in their acts. The military changes that have taken place disgust the troops, and cause the most deserving officers to resign; a seditious flame has sprung up in the very bosom of the Parliaments; you seek to corrupt them, and the remedy is worse than the disease. It is introducing vice into the sanctuary of justice, and gangrene into the vital parts of the commonwealth. Would a corrupted Parliament have braved the fury of the League, in order to preserve the crown for the legitimate sovereign? Forgetting the maxims of Louis XIV., who well understood the danger of confiding the administration to noblemen, you have chosen M. de Choiseul, and even given him three departments; which is a much heavier burden than that which he would have to support as Prime Minister, because the latter has only to oversee the details executed by the Secretaries of State. The public fully appreciate this dazzling Minister. He is nothing more than a 'petit-maitre', without talents or information, who has a little phosphorus in his mind. There is a thing well worthy of remark, Sire; that is, the open war carried on against religion. Henceforward there can spring up no new sects, because the general belief has been shaken, that no one feels inclined to occupy himself with difference of sentiment upon some of the articles. The Encyclopedists, under pretence of enlightening mankind, are sapping the foundations of religion. All the different

kinds of liberty are connected; the Philosophers and the Protestants tend towards republicanism, as well as the Jansenists. The Philosophers strike at the root, the others lop the branches; and their efforts, without being concerted, will one day lay the tree low. Add to these the Economists; whose object is political liberty, as that of the others is liberty of worship, and the Government may find itself, in twenty or thirty years, undermined in every direction, and will then fall with a crash. If Your Majesty, struck by this picture, but too true, should ask me for a remedy, I should say, that it is necessary to bring back the Government to its principles, and, above all, to lose no time in restoring order to the state of the finances, because the embarrassments incident to a country in a state of debt necessitate fresh taxes, which, after grinding the people, induce them towards revolt. It is my opinion that Your Majesty would do well to appear more among your people; to shew your approbation of useful services, and your displeasure of errors and prevarications, and neglect of duty: in a word, to let it be seen that rewards and punishments, appointments and dismissals, proceed from yourself. You will then inspire gratitude by your favours, and fear by your reproaches; you will then be the object of immediate and personal attachment, instead of which, everything is now referred to your Ministers. The confidence in the King, which is habitual to your people, is shewn by the exclamation, so common among them, 'Ah! if the King knew it' They love to believe that the King would remedy all their evils, if he knew of them. But, on the other hand, what sort of ideas must they form of kings, whose duty it is to be informed of everything, and to superintend everything, that concerns the public, but who are, nevertheless, ignorant of everything which the discharge of their functions requires them to know? 'Rex, roi, regere, regar, conduire'—to rule, to conduct—these words sufficiently denote their duties. What would be said of a father who got rid of the charge of his children as of a burthen?

"A time will come, Sire, when the people shall be enlightened—and that time is probably approaching. Resume the reins of government, hold them with a firm hand, and act, so that it cannot be said of you, 'Faeminas et scorta volvit ammo et haec principatus praemia putat':—Sire, if I see that my sincere advice should have produced any change, I shall continue it, and enter into more details; if not, I shall remain silent."

Now that I am upon the subject of anonymous letters to the King, I must just mention that it is impossible to conceive how frequent they were. People were extremely assiduous in telling either unpleasant truths, or alarming lies, with a view to injure others. As an instance, I shall transcribe one concerning Voltaire, who paid great court to Madame de Pompadour when he was in France. This letter was written long after the former.

"Madame—M. de Voltaire has just dedicated his tragedy of Tancred to you; this ought to be an offering of respect and gratitude; but it is, in fact, an insult, and you will form the same opinion of it as the public has done if you read it with attention. You will see that this distinguished writer appears to betray a consciousness that the subject of his encomiums is not worthy of them, and to endeavour to excuse himself for them to the public. These are his words: 'I have seen your graces and talents unfold themselves from your infancy. At all periods of your life I have received proofs of your uniform and unchanging kindness. If any critic be found to censure the homage I pay you, he must have a heart formed for ingratitude. I am under great obligations to you, Madame, and these obligations it is my duty to proclaim.'

"What do these words really signify, unless that Voltaire feels it may be thought extraordinary that he should dedicate his work to a woman who possesses but a small share of the public esteem, and that the sentiment of gratitude must plead his excuse? Why should he suppose that the homage he pays you will be censured, whilst we daily see dedications

addressed to silly gossips who have neither rank nor celebrity, or to women of exceptional conduct, without any censure being attracted by it?"

M. de Marigny, and Colin, Madame de Pompadour's steward, were of the same opinion as Quesnay, that the author of this letter was extremely malicious; that he insulted Madame, and tried to injure Voltaire; but that he was, in fact, right. Voltaire, from that moment, was entirely out of favour with Madame, and with the King, and he certainly never discovered the cause.

The King, who admired everything of the age of Louis XIV., and recollected that the Boileaus and Racines had been protected by that monarch, who was indebted to them, in part, for the lustre of his reign, was flattered at having such a man as Voltaire among his subjects. But still he feared him, and had but little esteem for him. He could not help saying, "Moreover, I have treated him as well as Louis XIV. treated Racine and Boileau. I have given him, as Louis XIV. gave to Racine, some pensions, and a place of gentleman in ordinary. It is not my fault if he has committed absurdities, and has had the pretension to become a chamberlain, to wear an order, and sup with a King. It is not the fashion in France; and, as there are here a few more men of wit and noblemen than in Prussia, it would require that I should have a very large table to assemble them all at it." And then he reckoned upon his fingers, Maupertuis, Fontenelle, La Mothe, Voltaire, Piron, Destouches, Montesquieu, the Cardinal Polignac. "Your Majesty forgets," said some one, "D'Alembert and Clairaut."—"And Crebillon," said he. "And la Chaussee, and the younger Crebillon," said some one. "He ought to be more agreeable than his father."—"And there are also the Abbes Prevot and d'Olivet."—"Pretty well," said the King; "and for the last twenty years all that (tout cela) would have dined and supped at my table."

Madame de Pompadour repeated to me this conversation, which I wrote down the same evening. M. de Marigny, also, talked to me about it. "Voltaire," said he, "has always had a fancy for being Ambassador, and he did all he could to make the people believe that he was charged with some political mission, the first time he visited Prussia."

The people heard of the attempt on the King's life with transports of fury, and with the greatest distress. Their cries were heard under the windows of Madame de Pompadour's apartment. Mobs were collected, and Madame feared the fate of Madame de Chateauroux. Her friends came in, every minute, to give her intelligence. Her room was, at all times, like a church; everybody seemed to claim a right to go in and out when he chose. Some came, under pretence of sympathising, to observe her countenance and manner. She did nothing but weep and faint away. Doctor Quesnay never left her, nor did I. M. de St. Florentin came to see her several times, so did the Comptroller-General, and M. Rouilld; but M. de Machault did not come. The Duchesse de Brancas came very frequently. The Abbe de Bernis never left us, except to go to enquire for the King. The tears came in his eyes whenever he looked at Madame. Doctor Quesnay saw the King five or six times a day. "There is nothing to fear," said he to Madame. "If it were anybody else, he might go to a ball." My son went the next day, as he had done the day the event occurred, to see what was going on at the Castle. He told us, on his return, that the Keeper of the Seals was with the King. I sent him back, to see what course he took on leaving the King. He came running back in half an hour, to tell me that the Keeper of the Seals had gone to his own house, followed by a crowd of people. When I told this to Madame, she burst into tears, and said, "Is that a friend?" The Abbe de Bernis said, "You must not judge him hastily, in such a moment as this." I returned into the drawing-room about an hour after, when the Keeper of the Seals entered. He passed me, with his usual cold and severe look. "How is Madame de Pompadour?" said he. "Alas!" replied I, "as you may imagine!" He passed on to her closet. Everybody retired, and he remained for half an

hour. The Abbe returned and Madame rang. I went into her room, the Abbe following me. She was in tears. “I must go, my dear Abbe,” said she. I made her take some orange-flower water, in a silver goblet, for her teeth chattered. She then told me to call her equerry. He came in, and she calmly gave him her orders, to have everything prepared at her hotel, in Paris; to tell all her people to get ready to go; and to desire her coachman not to be out of the way. She then shut herself up, to confer with the Abbe de Bernis, who left her, to go to the Council. Her door was then shut, except to the ladies with whom she was particularly intimate, M. de Soubise, M. de Gontaut, the Ministers, and some others. Several ladies, in the greatest distress, came to talk to me in my room: they compared the conduct of M. de Machault with that of M. de Richelieu, at Metz. Madame had related to them the circumstances extremely to the honour of the Duke, and, by contrast, the severest satire on the Keeper of the Seals. “He thinks, or pretends to think,” said she, “that the priests will be clamorous for my dismissal; but Quesnay and all the physicians declare that there is not the slightest danger.” Madame having sent for me, I saw the Marechale de Mirepoix coming in. While she was at the door, she cried out, “What are all those trunks, Madame? Your people tell me you are going.”—“Alas! my dear friend, such is our Master’s desire, as M. de Machault tells me.”—“And what does he advise?” said the Marechale. “That I should go without delay.” During this conversation, I was undressing Madame, who wished to be at her ease on her chaise-longue. “Your Beeper of the Seals wants to get the power into his own hands, and betrays you; he who quits the field loses it.” I went out. M. de Soubise entered, then the Abbe and M. de Marigny. The latter, who was very kind to me, came into my room an hour afterwards. I was alone. “She will remain,” said he; “but, hush!—she will make an appearance of going, in order not to set her enemies at work. It is the little Marechale who prevailed upon her to stay: her keeper (so she called M. de Machault) will pay for it.” Quesnay came in, and, having heard what was said, with his monkey airs, began to relate a fable of a fox, who, being at dinner with other beasts, persuaded one of them that his enemies were seeking him, in order that he might get possession of his share in his absence. I did not see Madame again till very late, at her going to bed. She was more calm. Things improved, from day to day, and de Machault, the faithless friend, was dismissed. The King returned to Madame de Pompadour, as usual. I learnt, by M. de Marigny, that the Abbe had been, one day, with M. d’Argenson, to endeavour to persuade him to live on friendly terms with Madame, and that he had been very coldly received. “He is the more arrogant,” said he, “on account of Machault’s dismissal, which leaves the field clear for him, who has more experience, and more talent; and I fear that he will, therefore, be disposed to declare war till death.” The next day, Madame having ordered her chaise, I was curious to know where she was going, for she went out but little, except to church, and to the houses of the Ministers. I was told that she was gone to visit M. d’Argenson. She returned in an hour, at farthest, and seemed very much out of spirits. She leaned on the chimneypiece, with her eyes fixed on the border of it. M. de Bernis entered. I waited for her to take off her cloak and gloves. She had her hands in her muff. The Abbe stood looking at her for some minutes; at last he said, “You look like a sheep in a reflecting mood.” She awoke from her reverie, and, throwing her muff on the easy-chair, replied, “It is a wolf who makes the sheep reflect.” I went out: the King entered shortly after, and I heard Madame de Pompadour sobbing. The Abbe came into my room, and told me to bring some Hoffman’s drops: the King himself mixed the draught with sugar, and presented it to her in the kindest manner possible. She smiled, and kissed the King’s hands. I left the room. Two days after, very early in the morning, I heard of M. d’Argenson’s exile. It was her doing, and was, indeed, the strongest proof of her influence that could be given. The King was much attached to M. d’Argenson, and the war, then carrying on, both by sea and land, rendered the dismissal of two such Ministers extremely imprudent. This was the universal opinion at the time.

Many people talk of the letter of the Comte d'Argenson to Madame d'Esparbes. I give it, according to the most correct version:

"The doubtful is, at length, decided. The Keeper of the Seals is dismissed. You will be recalled, my dear Countess, and we shall be masters of the field."

It is much less generally known that Arboulin, whom Madame calls Bou-bou, was supposed to be the person who, on the very day of the dismissal of the Keeper of the Seals, bribed the Count's confidential courier, who gave him this letter. Is this report founded on truth? I cannot swear that it is; but it is asserted that the letter is written in the Count's style. Besides, who could so immediately have invented it? It, however, appeared certain, from the extreme displeasure of the King, that he had some other subject of complaint against M. d'Argenson, besides his refusing to be reconciled with Madame. Nobody dares to show the slightest attachment to the disgraced Minister. I asked the ladies who were most intimate with Madame de Pompadour, as well as my own friends, what they knew of the matter; but they knew nothing. I can understand why Madame did not let them into her confidence at that moment. She will be less reserved in time. I care very little about it, since I see that she is well, and appears happy.

The King said a thing, which did him honour, to a person whose name Madame withheld from me. A nobleman, who had been a most assiduous courtier of the Count, said, rubbing his hands with an air of great joy, "I have just seen the Comte d'Argenson's baggage set out." When the King heard him, he went up to Madame, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "And immediately the cock crew."

"I believe this is taken from Scripture, where Peter denies Our Lord. I confess, this circumstance gave me great pleasure. It showed that the King is not the dupe of those around him, and that he hates treachery and ingratitude."

Madame sent for me yesterday evening, at seven o'clock, to read something to her; the ladies who were intimate with her were at Paris, and M. de Gontaut ill. "The King," said she, "will stay late at the Council this evening; they are occupied with the affairs of the Parliament again." She bade me leave off reading, and I was going to quit the room, but she called out, "Stop." She rose; a letter was brought in for her, and she took it with an air of impatience and ill-humour. After a considerable time she began to talk openly, which only happened when she was extremely vexed; and, as none of her confidential friends were at hand, she said to me, "This is from my brother. It is what he would not have dared to say to me, so he writes. I had arranged a marriage for him with the daughter of a man of title; he appeared to be well inclined to it, and I, therefore, pledged my word. He now tells me that he has made inquiries; that the parents are people of insupportable hauteur; that the daughter is very badly educated; and that he knows, from authority not to be doubted, that when she heard this marriage discussed, she spoke of the connection with the most supreme contempt; that he is certain of this fact; and that I was still more contemptuously spoken of than himself. In a word, he begs me to break off the treaty. But he has let me go too far; and now he will make these people my irreconcilable enemies. This has been put in his head by some of his flatterers; they do not wish him to change his way of living; and very few of them would be received by his wife." I tried to soften Madame, and, though I did not venture to tell her so, I thought her brother right. She persisted in saying these were lies, and, on the following Sunday, treated her brother very coldly. He said nothing to me at that time; if he had, he would have embarrassed me greatly. Madame atoned for everything by procuring favours, which were the means of facilitating the young lady's marriage with a gentleman of the Court. Her conduct, two months after marriage, compelled Madame to confess that her brother had been perfectly right.

I saw my friend, Madame du Chiron. “Why,” said she, “is the Marquise so violent an enemy to the Jesuits? I assure you she is wrong. All powerful as she is, she may find herself the worse for their enmity.” I replied that I knew nothing about the matter. “It is, however, unquestionably a fact; and she does not feel that a word more or less might decide her fate.”—“How do you mean?” said I. “Well, I will explain myself fully,” said she. “You know what took place at the time the King was stabbed: an attempt was made to get her out of the Castle instantly. The Jesuits have no other object than the salvation of their penitents; but they are men, and hatred may, without their being aware of it, influence their minds, and inspire them with a greater degree of severity than circumstances absolutely demand. Favour and partiality may, on the other hand, induce the confessor to make great concessions; and the shortest interval may suffice to save a favourite, especially if any decent pretext can be found for prolonging her stay at Court.” I agreed with her in all she said, but I told her that I dared not touch that string. On reflecting on this conversation afterwards, I was forcibly struck with this fresh proof of the intrigues of the Jesuits, which, indeed, I knew well already. I thought that, in spite of what I had replied to Madame du Chiron, I ought to communicate this to Madame de Pompadour, for the ease of my conscience; but that I would abstain from making any reflection upon it. “Your friend, Madame du Chiron,” said she, “is, I perceive, affiliated to the Jesuits, and what she says does not originate with herself. She is commissioned by some reverend father, and I will know by whom.” Spies were, accordingly, set to watch her movements, and they discovered that one Father de Saci, and, still more particularly, one Father Frey, guided this lady’s conduct. “What a pity,” said Madame to me, “that the Abbe Chauvelin cannot know this.” He was the most formidable enemy of the reverend fathers. Madame du Chiron always looked upon me as a Jansenist, because I would not espouse the interests of the good fathers with as much warmth as she did.

Madame is completely absorbed in the Abbe de Bernis, whom she thinks capable of anything; she talks of him incessantly. Apropos, of this Abbe, I must relate an anecdote, which almost makes one believe in conjurors. A year, or fifteen months, before her disgrace, Madame de Pompadour, being at Fontainebleau, sat down to write at a desk, over which hung a portrait of the King. While she was, shutting the desk, after she had finished writing, the picture fell, and struck her violently on the head.. The persons who saw the accident were alarmed, and sent for Dr. Quesnay. He asked the circumstances of the case, and ordered bleeding and anodynes. Just, as she had been bled, Madame de Brancas entered, and saw us all in confusion and agitation, and Madame lying on her *chaise-longue*. She asked what was the matter, and was told. After having expressed her regret, and having consoled her, she said, “I ask it as a favour of Madame, and of the King (who had just come in), that they will instantly send a courier to the Abbe de Bernis, and that the Marquise will have the goodness to write a letter, merely requesting him to inform her what his fortune-tellers told him, and to withhold nothing from the fear of making her uneasy.” The thing was, done as she desired, and she then told us that La Bontemps had predicted, from the dregs in the coffee-cup, in which she read everything, that the head of her best friend was in danger, but that no fatal consequences would ensue.

The next day, the Abbe wrote word that Madame Bontemps also said to him, “You came into the world almost black,” and that this was the fact. This colour, which lasted for some time, was attributed to a picture which hung at the foot of his, mother’s bed, and which she often looked at. It represented a Moor bringing to Cleopatra a basket of flowers, containing the asp by whose bite she destroyed herself. He said that she also told him, “You have a great deal of money about you, but it does not belong to you;” and that he had actually in his pocket two hundred Louis for the Duc de La Valliere. Lastly, he informed us that she said, looking in the cup, “I see one of your friends—the best—a distinguished lady, threatened with an accident;”

that he confessed that, in spite of all his philosophy, he turned pale; that she remarked this, looked again into the cup, and continued, “Her head will be slightly in danger, but of this no appearance will remain half an hour afterwards.” It was impossible to doubt the facts. They appeared so surprising to the King, that he desired some inquiry to be made concerning the fortune-teller. Madame, however, protected her from the pursuit of the Police.

A man, who was quite as astonishing as this fortune-teller, often visited Madame de Pompadour. This was the Comte de St. Germain, who wished to have it believed that he had lived several centuries.[6]

One day, at her toilet, Madame said to him, in my presence, “What was the personal appearance of Francis I.? He was a King I should have liked.”—“He was, indeed, very captivating,” said St. Germain; and he proceeded to describe his face and person as one does that of a man one has accurately observed. “It is a pity he was too ardent. I could have given him some good advice, which would have saved him from all his misfortunes; but he would not have followed it; for it seems as if a fatality attended Princes, forcing them to shut their ears, those of the mind, at least, to the best advice, and especially in the most critical moments.”—“And the Constable,” said Madame, “what do you say of him?”—“I cannot say much good or much harm of him,” replied he. “Was the Court of Francis I. very brilliant?”—“Very brilliant; but those of his grandsons infinitely surpassed it. In the time of Mary Stuart and Margaret of Valois it was a land of enchantment—a temple, sacred to pleasures of every kind; those of the mind were not neglected. The two Queens were learned, wrote verses, and spoke with captivating grace and eloquence.” Madame said, laughing, “You seem to have seen all this.”—“I have an excellent memory,” said he, “and have read the history of France with great care. I sometimes amuse myself, not by making, but by letting it be believed that I lived in old times.”—“You do not tell me your age, however, and you give yourself out for very old. The Comtesse de Gergy, who was Ambassadress to Venice, I think, fifty years ago, says she knew you there exactly what you are now.”—“It is true, Madame, that I have known Madame de Gergy a long time.”—“But, according to what she says, you would be more than a hundred”—“That is not impossible,” said he, laughing; “but it is, I allow, still more possible that Madame de Gergy, for whom I have the greatest respect, may be in her dotage.”—“You have given her an elixir, the effect of which is surprising. She declares that for a long time she has felt as if she was only four-and-twenty years of age; why don’t you give some to the King?”—“Ah! Madame,” said he, with a sort of terror, “I must be mad to think of giving the King an unknown drug.” I went into my room to write down this conversation. Some days afterwards, the King, Madame de Pompadour, some Lords of the Court, and the Comte de St. Germain, were talking about his secret for causing the spots in diamonds to disappear. The King ordered a diamond of middling size, which had a spot, to be brought. It was weighed; and the King said to the Count, “It is valued at two hundred and forty louis; but it would be worth four hundred if it had no spot. Will you try to put a hundred and sixty louis into my

[6] *St. Germain was an adept—a worthy predecessor of Cagliostro, who expected to live five hundred years. The Count de St. Germain pretended to have already lived two thousand, and, according to him, the account was still running. He went so far as to claim the power of transmitting the gift of long life. One day, calling upon his servant to, bear witness to a fact that went pretty far back, the man replied, “I have no recollection of it, sir; you forget that I have only had the honour of serving you for five hundred years.” St. Germain, like all other charlatans of this sort, assumed a theatrical magnificence, and an air of science calculated to deceive the vulgar. His best instrument of deception was the phantasmagoria; and as, by means of this abuse of the science of optics, he called up shades which were asked for, and almost always recognised, his correspondence with the other world was a thing proved by the concurrent testimony of numerous witnesses. He played the same game in London, Venice, and Holland, but he constantly regretted Paris, where his miracles were never questioned. St. Germain passed his latter days at the Court of the Prince of Hesse Cassel, and died at Plewig, in 1784, in the midst of his enthusiastic disciples, and to their infinite astonishment at his sharing the common destiny.*

pocket?" He examined it carefully, and said, "It may be done; and I will bring it you again in a month." At the time appointed, the Count brought back the diamond without a spot, and gave it to the King. It was wrapped in a cloth of amianthus, which he took off. The King had it weighed, and found it but very little diminished. The King sent it to his jeweller by M. de Gontaut, without telling him anything of what had passed. The jeweller gave three hundred and eighty louis for it. The King, however, sent for it back again, and kept it as a curiosity. He could not overcome his surprise, and said that M. de St. Germain must be worth millions, especially if he had also the secret of making large diamonds out of a number of small ones. He neither said that he had, nor that he had not; but he positively asserted that he could make pearls grow, and give them the finest water. The King, paid him great attention, and so did Madame de Pompadour. It was from her I learnt what I have just related. M. Queanay said, talking of the pearls, "They are produced by a disease in the oyster. It is possible to know the cause of it; but, be that as it may, he is not the less a quack, since he pretends to have the elixir vitae, and to have lived several centuries. Our master is, however, infatuated by him, and sometimes talks of him as if his descent were illustrious."

I have seen him frequently: he appeared to be about fifty; he was neither fat nor thin; he had an acute, intelligent look, dressed very simply, but in good taste; he wore very fine diamonds in his rings, watch, and snuff-box. He came, one day, to visit Madame de Pompadour, at a time when the Court was in full splendour, with knee and shoe-buckles of diamonds so fine and brilliant that Madame said she did not believe the King had any equal to them. He went into the antechamber to take them off, and brought them to be examined; they were compared with others in the room, and the Duc de Gontaut, who was present, said they were worth at least eight thousand louis. He wore, at the same time, a snuff-box of inestimable value, and ruby sleeve-buttons, which were perfectly dazzling. Nobody could find out by what means this man became so rich and so remarkable; but the King would not suffer him to be spoken of with ridicule or contempt. He was said to be a bastard son of the King of Portugal.

I learnt, from M. de Marigny, that the relations of the good little Marechale (de Mirepoix) had been extremely severe upon her, for what they called the baseness of her conduct, with regard to Madame de Pompadour. They said she held the stones of the cherries which Madame ate in her carriage, in her beautiful little hands, and that she sate in the front of the carriage, while Madame occupied the whole seat in the inside. The truth was, that, in going to Crecy, on an insupportably hot day, they both wished to sit alone, that they might be cooler; and as to the matter of the cherries, the villagers having brought them some, they ate them to refresh themselves, while the horses were changed; and the Marechal emptied her pocket-handkerchief, into which they had both thrown the cherry-stones, out of the carriage window. The people who were changing the horses had given their own version of the affair.

I had, as you know, a very pretty room at Madame's hotel, whither I generally went privately. I had, one day, had visits from two or three Paris representatives, who told me news; and Madame, having sent for me, I went to her, and found her with M. de Gontaut. I could not help instantly saying to her, "You must be much pleased, Madame, at the noble action of the Marquis de ———." Madame replied, drily, "Hold your tongue, and listen to what I have to say to you." I returned to my little room, where I found the Comtesse d'Amblimont, to whom I mentioned Madame's reception of me. "I know what is the matter," said she; "it has no relation to you. I will explain it to you. The Marquis de ————- has told all Paris, that, some days ago, going home at night, alone, and on foot, he heard cries in a street called Ferou, which is dark, and, in great part, arched over; that he drew his sword, and went down the street, in which he saw, by the light of a lamp, a very handsome woman, to whom some ruffians were offering violence; that he approached, and that the woman cried out, 'Save me! save me!' that he rushed upon the wretches, two of whom fought him, sword in hand, whilst a

third held the woman, and tried to stop her mouth; that he wounded one in the arm; and that the ruffians, hearing people pass at the end of the street, and fearing they might come to his assistance, fled; that he went up to the lady, who told him that they were not robbers, but villains, one of whom was desperately in love with her; and that the lady knew not how to express her gratitude; that she had begged him not to follow her, after he had conducted her to a fiacre; that she would not tell him her name, but that she insisted on his accepting a little ring, as a token of remembrance; and that she promised to see him again, and to tell him her whole history, if he gave her his address; that he complied with this request of the lady, whom he represented as a charming person, and who, in the overflowing of her gratitude, embraced him several times. This is all very fine, so far," said Madame d'Amblimont, "but hear the rest. The Marquis de exhibited himself everywhere the next day, with a black ribbon bound round his arm, near the wrist, in which part he said he had received a wound. He related his story to everybody, and everybody commented upon it after his own fashion. He went to dine with the Dauphin, who spoke to him of his bravery, and of his fair unknown, and told him that he had already complimented the Duc de C—— on the affair. I forgot to tell you," continued Madame d'Amblimont, "that, on the very night of the adventure, he called on Madame d'Estillac, an old gambler, whose house is open till four in the morning; that everybody there was surprised at the disordered state in which he appeared; that his bagwig had fallen off, one skirt of his coat was cut, and his right hand bleeding. That they instantly bound it up, and gave him some Rota wine. Four days ago, the Duc de C—— supped with the King, and sat near M. de St. Florentin. He talked to him of his relation's adventure, and asked him if he had made any inquiries concerning the lady. M. de St. Florentin coldly answered, 'No!' and M. de C—— remarked, on asking him some further questions, that he kept his eyes firmed on his plate, looking embarrassed, and answered in monosyllables. He asked him the reason of this, upon which M. de Florentin told him that it was extremely distressing to him to see him under such a mistake. 'How can you know that, supposing it to be the fact?' said M. de ———, 'Nothing is more easy to prove,' replied M. de St. Florentin. 'You may imagine that, as soon as I was informed of the Marquis de ———'s adventure, I set on foot inquiries, the result of which was, that, on the night when this affair was said to have taken place, a party of the watch was set in ambuscade in this very street, for the purpose of catching a thief who was coming out of the gaming house; that this party was there four hours, and heard not the slightest noise.' M. de C was greatly incensed at this recital, which M. de St. Florentin ought, indeed, to have communicated to the King. He has ordered, or will order, his relation to retire to his province.

"After this, you will judge, my dear, whether you were very likely to be graciously received when you went open-mouthed with your compliment to the Marquise. This adventure," continued she, "reminded the King of one which occurred about fifteen years ago. The Comte d'E——, who was what is called 'enfant d'honneur' to the Dauphin, and about fourteen years of age, came into the Dauphin's apartments, one evening, with his bag-wig snatched off, and his ruffles torn, and said that, having walked rather late near the piece of water des Suisses, he had been attacked by two robbers; that he had refused to give them anything, drawn his sword, and put himself in an attitude of defence; that one of the robbers was armed with a sword, the other with a large stick, from which he had received several blows, but that he had wounded one in the arm, and that, hearing a noise at that moment, they had fled. But unluckily for the little Count, it was known that people were on the spot at the precise time he mentioned, and had heard nothing. The Count was pardoned, on account of his youth. The Dauphin made him confess the truth, and it was looked upon as a childish freak to set people talking about him."

The King disliked the King of Prussia because he knew that the latter was in the habit of jesting upon his mistress, and the kind of life he led. It was Frederick's fault, as I have heard it said, that the King was not his most steadfast ally and friend, as much as sovereigns can be towards each other; but the jestings of Frederick had stung him, and made him conclude the treaty of Versailles. One day, he entered Madame's apartment with a paper in his hand, and said, "The King of Prussia is certainly a great man; he loves men of talent, and, like Louis XIV., he wishes to make Europe ring with his favours towards foreign savans. There is a letter from him, addressed to Milord Marshal, ordering him to acquaint a 'superieur' man of my kingdom (D'Alembert) that he has granted him a pension;" and, looking at the letter, he read the following words: "You must know that there is in Paris a man of the greatest merit, whose fortune is not proportionate to his talents and character. I may serve as eyes to the blind goddess, and repair in some measure the injustice, and I beg you to offer on that account. I flatter myself that he will accept this pension because of the pleasure I shall feel in obliging a man who joins beauty of character to the most sublime intellectual talents."[7]

The King here stopped, on seeing MM. de Ayen and de Gontaut enter, and then recommenced reading the letter to them, and added, "It was given me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to whom it was confided by Milord Marshal, for the purpose of obtaining my permission for this sublime genius to accept the favour. But," said the King, "what do you think is the amount?" Some said six, eight, ten thousand livres. "You have not guessed," said the King; "it is twelve hundred livres."—"For sublime talents," said the Duc d'Ayen, "it is not much. But the philosophers will make Europe resound with this letter, and the King of Prussia will have the pleasure of making a great noise at little expense."

The Chevalier de Courten,—[The Chevalier de Courten was a Swiss, and a man of talent.]—who had been in Prussia, came in, and, hearing this story told, said, "I have seen what is much better than that: passing through a village in Prussia, I got out at the posthouse, while I was waiting for horses; and the postmaster, who was a captain in the Prussian service, showed me several letters in Frederick's handwriting, addressed to his uncle, who was a man of rank, promising him to provide for his nephews; the provision he made for this, the eldest of these nephews, who was dreadfully wounded, was the postmastership which he then held." M. de Marigny related this story at Quesnay's, and added, that the man of genius above mentioned was D'Alembert, and that the King had permitted him to accept the pension. He added, that his sister had suggested to the King that he had better give D'Alembert a pension of twice the value, and forbid him to take the King of Prussia's. This advice he would not take, because he looked upon D'Alembert as an infidel. M. de Marigny took a copy of the letter, which he lent me.

A certain nobleman, at one time, affected to cast tender glances on Madame Adelaide. She was wholly unconscious of it; but, as there are Arguses at Court, the King was, of course, told of it, and, indeed, he thought he had perceived it himself. I know that he came into Madame de Pompadour's room one day, in a great passion, and said, "Would you believe that there is

[7] *George Keith, better known under the name of Milord Marshal, was the eldest son of William Keith, Earl Marshal of Scotland. He was an avowed partisan of the Stuarts, and did not lay down the arms he had taken up in their cause until it became utterly desperate, and drew upon its defenders useless dangers. When they were driven from their country, he renounced it, and took up his residence successively in France, Prussia, Spain, and Italy. The delicious country and climate of Valencia he preferred above any other. Milord Marshal died in the month of May, 1778. It was he who said to Madame Geoffrin, speaking of his brother, who was field-marshal in the Prussian service, and died on the field of honour, "My brother leaves me the most glorious inheritance" (he had just laid the whole of Bohemia under contribution); "his property does not amount to seventy ducats." A eulogium on Milord Marshal, by D'Alembert, is extant. It is the most cruelly mangled of all his works, by Linguet*

a man in my Court insolent enough to dare to raise his eyes to one of my daughters?" Madame had never seen him so exasperated, and this illustrious nobleman was advised to feign a necessity for visiting his estates. He remained there two months. Madame told me, long after, that she thought that there were no tortures to which the King would not have condemned any man who had seduced one of his daughters. Madame Adelaide, at the time in question, was a charming person, and united infinite grace, and much talent, to a most agreeable face.

A courier brought Madame de Pompadour a letter, on reading which she burst into tears. It contained the intelligence of the battle of Rosbach, which M. de Soubise sent her, with all the details. I heard her say to the Marechal de Belle-Isle, wiping her eyes, "M. de Soubise is inconsolable; he does not try to excuse his conduct, he sees nothing but the disastrous fortune which pursues him."—"M. de Soubise must, however, have many things to urge in his own behalf," said M. de Belle-Isle, "and so I told the King."—"It is very noble in you, Marshal, not to suffer an unfortunate man to be overwhelmed; the public are furious against him, and what has he done to deserve it?"—"There is not a more honourable nor a kinder man in the world. I only fulfil my duty in doing justice to the truth, and to a man for whom I have the most profound esteem. The King will explain to you, Madame, how M. de Soubise was forced to give battle by the Prince of Sage-Hildbourgshausen, whose troops fled first, and carried along the French troops." Madame would have embraced the old Marshal if she had dared, she was so delighted with him.

M. de Soubise, having gained a battle, was made Marshal of France: Madame was enchanted with her friend's success. But, either it was unimportant, or the public were offended at his promotion; nobody talked of it but Madame's friends. This unpopularity was concealed from her, and she said to Colin, her steward, at her toilet, "Are you not delighted at the victory M. de Soubise has gained? What does the public say of it? He has taken his revenge well." Colin was embarrassed, and knew not what to answer. As she pressed him further, he replied that he had been ill, and had seen nobody for a week.

M. de Marigny came to see me one day, very much out of humour. I asked him the cause. "I have," said he, "just been intreating my sister not to make M. le Normand-de-Mezi Minister of the Marine. I told her that she was heaping coals of fire upon her own head. A favourite ought not to multiply the points of attack upon herself." The Doctor entered. "You," said the Doctor, "are worth your weight in gold, for the good sense and capacity you have shewn in your office, and for your moderation, but you will never be appreciated as you deserve; your advice is excellent; there will never be a ship taken but Madame will be held responsible for it to the public, and you are very wise not to think of being in the Ministry yourself."

One day, when I was at Paris, I went to dine with the Doctor, who happened to be there at the same time; there were, contrary to his usual custom, a good many people, and, among others, a handsome young Master of the Requests, who took a title from some place, the name of which I have forgotten, but who was a son of M. Turgot, the 'prevot des marchands'. They talked a great deal about administration, which was not very amusing to me; they then fell upon the subject of the love Frenchmen bear to their Kings. M. Turgot here joined in the conversation, and said, "This is not a blind attachment; it is a deeply rooted sentiment, arising from an indistinct recollection of great benefits. The French nation—I may go farther—Europe, and all mankind, owe to a King of France" (I have forgotten his name)—[Phillip the Long]—"whatever liberty they enjoy. He established communes, and conferred on an immense number of men a civil existence. I am aware that it may be said, with justice, that he served his own interests by granting these franchises; that the cities paid him taxes, and that his design was to use them as instruments of weakening the power of great nobles; but what

does that prove, but that this measure was at once useful, politic, and humane?" From Kings in general the conversation turned upon Louis XV., and M. Turgot remarked that his reign would be always celebrated for the advancement of the sciences, the progress of knowledge, and of philosophy. He added that Louis XV. was deficient in the quality which Louis XIV. possessed to excess; that is to say, in a good opinion of himself; that he was well-informed; that nobody was more perfectly master of the topography of France; that his opinion in the Council was always the most judicious; and that it was much to be lamented that he had not more confidence in himself, or that he did not rely upon some Minister who enjoyed the confidence of the nation. Everybody agreed with him. I begged M. Quesnay to write down what young Turgot had said, and showed it to Madame. She praised this Master of the Requests greatly, and spoke of him to the King. "It is a good breed," said he.

One day, I went out to walk, and saw, on my return, a great many people going and coming, and speaking to each other privately: it was evident that something extraordinary had happened. I asked a person of my acquaintance what was the matter. "Alas!" said he, with tears in his eyes, "some assassins, who had formed the project of murdering the King, have inflicted several wounds on a garde-du-corps, who overheard them in a dark corridor; he is carried to the hospital: and as he has described the colour of these men's coats, the Police are in quest of them in all directions, and some people, dressed in clothes of that colour, are already arrested." I saw Madame with M. de Gontaut, and I hastened home. She found her door besieged by a multitude of people, and was alarmed: when she got in, she found the Comte de Noailles. "What is all this, Count?" said she. He said he was come expressly to speak to her, and they retired to her closet together. The conference was not long. I had remained in the drawing-room, with Madame's equerry, the Chevalier de Solent, Gourbillon, her valet de chambre, and some strangers. A great many details were related; but, the wounds being little more than scratches, and the garde-du-corps having let fall some contradictions, it was thought that he was an impostor, who had invented all this story to bring himself into favour. Before the night was over, this was proved to be the fact, and, I believe, from his own confession. The King came, that evening, to see Madame de Pompadour; he spoke of this occurrence with great sang froid, and said, "The gentleman who wanted to kill me was a wicked madman; this is a low scoundrel."

When he spoke of Damiens, which was only while his trial lasted, he never called him anything but that gentleman.

I have heard it said that he proposed having him shut up in a dungeon for life; but that the horrible nature of the crime made the judges insist upon his suffering all the tortures inflicted upon like occasions. Great numbers, many of them women, had a barbarous curiosity to witness the execution; amongst others, Madame de P———, a very beautiful woman, and the wife of a Farmer General. She hired two places at a window for twelve Louis, and played a game of cards in the room whilst waiting for the execution to begin. On this being told to the King, he covered his eyes with his hands and exclaimed, "Fi, la Vilaine!" I have been told that she, and others, thought to pay their court in this way, and signalise their attachment to the King's person.

Two things were related to me by M. Duclos at the time of the attempt on the King's life.

The first, relative to the Comte de Sponheim, who was the Duc de Deux-Ponts, and next in succession to the Palatinate and Electorate of Bavaria. He was thought to be a great friend to the King, and had made several long sojourns in France. He came frequently to see Madame. M. Duclos told us that the Duc de Deux-Ponts, having learned, at Deux-Ponts, the attempt on the King's life, immediately set out in a carriage for Versailles: "But remark," said he, "the spirit of 'courtisanerie' of a Prince, who may be Elector of Bavaria and the Palatinate

tomorrow. This was not enough. When he arrived within ten leagues of Paris, he put on an enormous pair of jack-boots, mounted a post-horse, and arrived in the court of the palace cracking his whip. If this had been real impatience, and not charlatanism, he would have taken horse twenty leagues from Paris."—"I don't agree with you," said a gentleman whom I did not know; "impatience sometimes seizes one towards the end of an undertaking, and one employs the readiest means then in one's power. Besides, the Duc de Deux-Ponts might wish, by showing himself thus on horseback, to serve the King, to whom he is attached, by proving to Frenchmen how greatly he is beloved and honoured in other countries." Duclos resumed: "Well," said he, "do you know the story of M. de C——-? The first day the King saw company, after the attempt of Damiens, M. de C——- pushed so vigorously through the crowd that he was one of the first to come into the King's presence, but he had on so shabby a black coat that it caught the King's attention, who burst out laughing, and said, 'Look at C——-, he has had the skirt of his coat torn off.' M. de C——- looked as if he was only then first conscious of his loss, and said, 'Sire, there is such a multitude hurrying to see Your Majesty, that I was obliged to fight my way through them, and, in the effort, my coat has been torn.'—'Fortunately it was not worth much,' said the Marquis de Souvre, 'and you could not have chosen a worse one to sacrifice on the occasion.'"

Madame de Pompadour had been very judiciously advised to get her husband, M. le Normand, sent to Constantinople, as Ambassador. This would have a little diminished the scandal caused by seeing Madame de Pompadour, with the title of Marquise, at Court, and her husband Farmer General at Paris. But he was so attached to a Paris life, and to his opera habits, that he could not be prevailed upon to go. Madame employed a certain M. d'Arboulin, with whom she had been acquainted before she was at Court, to negotiate this affair. He applied to a Mademoiselle Rem, who had been an opera-dancer, and who was M. le Normand's mistress. She made him very fine promises; but she was like him, and preferred a Paris life. She would do nothing in it.

At the time that plays were acted in the little apartments, I obtained a lieutenancy for one of my relations, by a singular means, which proves the value the greatest people set upon the slightest access to the Court. Madame did not like to ask anything of M. d'Argenson, and, being pressed by my family, who could not imagine that, situated as I was, it could be difficult for me to obtain a command for a good soldier, I determined to go and ask the Comte d'Argenson. I made my request, and presented my memorial. He received me coldly, and gave me vague answers. I went out, and the Marquis de V——-, who was in his closet, followed me. "You wish to obtain a command," said he; "there is one vacant, which is promised me for one of my proteges; but if you will do me a favour in return, or obtain one for me, I will give it to you. I want to be a police officer, and you have it in your power to get me a place." I told him I did not understand the purport of his jest. "I will tell you," said he; "Tartuffe is going to be acted in the cabinets, and there is the part of a police officer, which only consists of a few lines. Prevail upon Madame de Pompadour to assign me that part, and the command is yours." I promised nothing, but I related the history to Madame, who said she would arrange it for me. The thing was done, and I obtained the command, and the Marquis de V——- thanked Madame as if she had made him a Duke.

The King was often annoyed by the Parliaments, and said a very remarkable thing concerning them, which M. de Gontaut repeated to Doctor Quesnay in my presence. "Yesterday," said he, "the King walked up and down the room with an anxious air. Madame de Pompadour asked him if he was uneasy about his health, as he had been, for some time, rather unwell. 'No,' replied he; 'but I am greatly annoyed by all these remonstrances.'—'What can come of them,' said she, 'that need seriously disquiet Your Majesty? Are you not master of the Parliaments, as well as of all the rest of the kingdom?'—'That is true,' said the King; 'but, if

it had not been for these counsellors and presidents, I should never have been stabbed by that gentleman' (he always called Damiens so). 'Ah! Sire,' cried Madame de Pompadour. 'Read the trial,' said he. 'It was the language of those gentlemen he names which turned his head.'—'But,' said Madame, 'I have often thought that, if the Archbishop—[M. de Beaumont]—could be sent to Rome—'—'Find anybody who will accomplish that business, and I will give him whatever he pleases.'" Quesnay said the King was right in all he had uttered. The Archbishop was exiled shortly after, and the King was seriously afflicted at being driven to take such a step. "What a pity," he often said, "that so excellent a man should be so obstinate."—"And so shallow," said somebody, one day. "Hold your tongue," replied the King, somewhat sternly. The Archbishop was very charitable, and liberal to excess, but he often granted pensions without discernment.[8]

He granted one of an hundred louis to a pretty woman, who was very poor, and who assumed an illustrious name, to which she had no right. The fear lest she should be plunged into vice led him to bestow such excessive bounty upon her; and the woman was an admirable dissembler. She went to the Archbishop's, covered with a great hood, and, when she left him, she amused herself with a variety of lovers.

Great people have the bad habit of talking very indiscreetly before their servants. M. de Gontaut once said these words, covertly, as he thought, to the Duc de ———, "That measures had been taken which would, probably, have the effect of determining the Archbishop to go to Rome, with a Cardinal's hat; and that, if he desired it, he was to have a coadjutor."

A very plausible pretext had been found for making this proposition, and for rendering it flattering to the Archbishop, and agreeable to his sentiments. The affair had been very adroitly begun, and success appeared certain. The King had the air, towards the Archbishop, of entire unconsciousness of what was going on. The negotiator acted as if he were only following the suggestions of his own mind, for the general good. He was a friend of the Archbishop, and was very sure of a liberal reward. A valet of the Duc de Gontaut, a very handsome young fellow, had perfectly caught the sense of what was spoken in a mysterious manner. He was one of the lovers of the lady of the hundred Louis a year, and had heard her talk of the Archbishop, whose relation she pretended to be. He thought he should secure her good graces by informing her that great efforts were being made to induce her patron to reside at Rome, with a view to get him away from Paris. The lady instantly told the Archbishop, as she was afraid of losing her pension if he went. The information squared so well with the negotiation then on foot, that the Archbishop had no doubt of its truth. He cooled, by degrees, in his conversations with the negotiator, whom he regarded as a traitor, and ended by breaking with him. These details were not known till long afterwards. The lover of the lady having been sent to the Bicetre, some letters were found among his papers, which gave a scent of the affair, and he was made to confess the rest.

In order not to compromise the Duc de Gontaut, the King was told that the valet had come to a knowledge of the business from a letter which he had found in his master's clothes. The

[8] *The following is a specimen of the advantages taken of his natural kindness. Madame la Caille, who acted the Duennas at the Opera Comique, was recommended to him as the mother of a family, who deserved his protection, The worthy prelate asked what he could do for her. "Monseigneur," said the actress, "two words from your hand to the Duc de Richelieu would induce him to grant me a demi-part." M. de Beaumont, who was very little acquainted with the language of the theatre, thought that a demi-part meant a more liberal portion of the Marshal's alms, and the note was written in the most pressing manner. The Marshal answered, that he thanked the Archbishop for the interest he took in the Theatre Italien, and in Madame la Caille, who was a very useful person at that theatre; that, nevertheless, she had a bad voice; but that the recommendation of the Archbishop was to be preferred to the greatest talents, and that the demi-part was granted.*

King took his revenge by humiliating the Archbishop, which he was enabled to do by means of the information he had obtained concerning the conduct of the lady, his protege. She was found guilty of swindling, in concert with her beloved valet; but, before her punishment was inflicted, the Lieutenant of Police was ordered to lay before Monseigneur a full account of the conduct of his relation and pensioner. The Archbishop had nothing to object to in the proofs which were submitted to him; he said, with perfect calmness, that she was not his relation; and, raising his hands to heaven, "She is an unhappy wretch," said he, "who has robbed me of the money which was destined for the poor. But God knows that, in giving her so large a pension, I did not act lightly. I had, at that time, before my eyes the example of a young woman who once asked me to grant her seventy louis a year, promising me that she would always live very virtuously, as she had hitherto done. I refused her, and she said, on leaving me, 'I must turn to the left, Monseigneur, since the way on the right is closed against me: The unhappy creature has kept her word but too well. She found means of establishing a faro-table at her house, which is tolerated; and she joins to the most profligate conduct in her own person the infamous trade of a corrupter of youth; her house is the abode of every vice. Think, sir, after that, whether it was not an act of prudence, on my part, to grant the woman in question a pension, suitable to the rank in which I thought her born, to prevent her abusing the gifts of youth, beauty, and talents, which she possessed, to her own perdition, and the destruction of others." The Lieutenant of Police told the King that he was touched with the candour and the noble simplicity of the prelate. "I never doubted his virtues," replied the King, "but I wish he would be quiet." This same Archbishop gave a pension of fifty louis a year to the greatest scoundrel in Paris. He is a poet, who writes abominable verses; this pension is granted on condition that his poems are never printed. I learned this fact from M. de Marigny, to whom he recited some of his horrible verses one evening, when he supped with him, in company with some people of quality. He chinked the money in his pocket. "This is my good Archbishop's," said he, laughing; "I keep my word with him: my poem will not be printed during my life, but I read it. What would the good prelate say if he knew that I shared my last quarter's allowance with a charming little opera-dancer? 'It is the Archbishop, then, who keeps me,' said she to me; 'Oh, la! how droll that is!'" The King heard this, and was much scandalised at it. "How difficult it is to do good!" said he.

The King came into Madame de Pompadour's room, one day, as she was finishing dressing. "I have just had a strange adventure," said he: "would you believe that, in going out of my wardroom into my bedroom, I met a gentleman face to face?"—"My God! Sire," cried Madame, terrified. "It was nothing," replied he; "but I confess I was greatly surprised: the man appeared speechless with consternation. 'What do you do here?' said I, civilly. He threw himself on his knees, saying, 'Pardon me, Sire; and, above all, have me searched: He instantly emptied his pockets himself; he pulled off his coat in the greatest agitation and terror: at last he told me that he was cook to ——-, and a friend of Beccari, whom he came to visit; that he had mistaken the staircase, and, finding all the doors open, he had wandered into the room in which I found him, and which he would have instantly left: I rang; Guimard came, and was astonished enough at finding me tete-a-tete with a man in his shirt. He begged Guimard to go with him into another room, and to search his whole person. After this, the poor devil returned, and put on his coat. Guimard said to me, 'He is certainly an honest man, and tells the truth; this may, besides, be easily ascertained.' Another of the servants of the palace came in, and happened to know him. 'I will answer for this good man,' said, he, 'who, moreover, makes the best 'boeuf a carlate' in the world.' As I saw the man was so agitated that he could not stand steady, I took fifty louis out of my bureau, and said, Here, sir, are fifty Louis, to quiet your alarms: He went out, after throwing himself at my feet." Madame exclaimed on the impropriety of having the King's bedroom thus accessible to everybody. He talked with great calmness of this strange apparition, but it was evident that he controlled

himself, and that he had, in fact, been much frightened, as, indeed, he had reason to be. Madame highly approved of the gift; and she was the more right in applauding it, as it was by no means in the King's usual manner. M. de Marigny said, when I told him of this adventure, that he would have wagered a thousand louis against the King's making a present of fifty, if anybody but I had told him of the circumstance. "It is a singular fact," continued he, "that all of the race of Valois have been liberal to excess; this is not precisely the case with the Bourbons, who are rather reproached with avarice. Henri IV. was said to be avaricious. He gave to his mistresses, because he could refuse them nothing; but he played with the eagerness of a man whose whole fortune depends on the game. Louis XIV. gave through ostentation. It is most astonishing," added he, "to reflect on what might have happened. The King might actually have been assassinated in his chamber, without anybody knowing anything of the matter and without a possibility of discovering the murderer." For more than a fortnight Madame could not get over this incident.

About that time she had a quarrel with her brother, and both were in the right. Proposals were made to him to marry the daughter of one of the greatest noblemen of the Court, and the King consented to create him a Duke, and even to make the title hereditary. Madame was right in wishing to aggrandise her brother, but he declared that he valued his liberty above all things, and that he would not sacrifice it except for a person he really loved. He was a true Epicurean philosopher, and a man of great capacity, according to the report of those who knew him well, and judged him impartially. It was entirely at his option to have had the reversion of M. de St. Florentin's place, and the place of Minister of Marine, when M. de Machault retired; he said to his sister, at the time, "I spare you many vexations, by depriving you of a slight satisfaction. The people would be unjust to me, however well I might fulfil the duties of my office. As to M. de St. Florentin's place, he may live five-and-twenty years, so that I should not be the better for it. Kings' mistresses are hated enough on their own account; they need not also draw upon, themselves the hatred which is directed against Ministers." M. Quesnay repeated this conversation to me.

The King had another mistress, who gave Madame de Pompadour some uneasiness. She was a woman of quality, and the wife of one of the most assiduous courtiers.

A man in immediate attendance on the King's person, and who had the care of his clothes, came to me one day, and told me that, as he was very much attached to Madame, because she was good and useful to the King, he wished to inform me that, a letter having fallen out of the pocket of a coat which His Majesty had taken off, he had had the curiosity to read it, and found it to be from the Comtesse de ——- who had already yielded to the King's desires. In this letter, she required the King to give her fifty thousand crowns in money, a regiment for one of her relations, and a bishopric for another, and to dismiss Madame in the space of fifteen days, etc. I acquainted Madame with what this man told me, and she acted with singular greatness of mind. She said to me, "I ought to inform the King of this breach of trust of his servant, who may, by the same means, come to the knowledge of, and make a bad use of, important secrets; but I feel a repugnance to ruin the man: however, I cannot permit him to remain near the King's person, and here is what I shall do: Tell him that there is a place of ten thousand francs a year vacant in one of the provinces; let him solicit the Minister of Finance for it, and it shall be granted to him; but, if he should ever disclose through what interest he has obtained it, the King shall be made acquainted with his conduct. By this means, I think I shall have done all that my attachment and duty prescribe. I rid the King of a faithless domestic, without ruining the individual." I did as Madame ordered me: her delicacy and address inspired me with admiration. She was not alarmed on account of the lady, seeing what her pretentions were. "She drives too quick," remarked Madame, "and will certainly be overturned on the road." The lady died.

“See what the Court is; all is corruption there, from the highest to the lowest,” said I to Madame, one day, when she was speaking to me of some facts, that had come to my knowledge. “I could tell you many others,” replied Madame; “but the little chamber, where you often remain, must furnish you with a sufficient number.” This was a little nook, from, whence I could hear a great part of what passed in Madame’s apartment. The Lieutenant of Police sometimes came secretly to this apartment, and waited there. Three or four persons, of high consideration, also found their way in, in a mysterious, manner, and several devotees, who were, in their hearts, enemies of Madame de Pompadour. But these men had not petty objects in view: one: required the government of a province; another, a seat in the Council; a third, a Captaincy of the Guards; and this man would have obtained it if the Marechale de Mirepoix had not requested it for her brother, the Prince de Beauvan. The Chevalier du Muy was not among these apostates; not even the promise of being High Constable would have tempted him to make up to Madame, still less to betray his master, the Dauphin. This Prince was, to the last degree, weary of the station he held. Sometimes, when teased to death by ambitious people, who pretended to be Catos, or wonderfully devout, he took part against a Minister against whom he was prepossessed; then relapsed into his accustomed state of inactivity and ennui.

The King used to say, “My son is lazy; his temper is Polonese—hasty and changeable; he has no tastes; he cares nothing for hunting, for women, or for good living; perhaps he imagines that if he were in my place he would be happy; at first, he would make great changes, create everything anew, as it were. In a short time he would be as tired of the rank of King as he now is of his own; he is only fit to live ‘en philosophe’, with clever people about him.” The King added, “He loves what is right; he is truly virtuous, and does not want under standing.”

M. de St. Germain said, one day, to the King, “To think well of mankind, one must be neither a Confessor, nor a Minister, nor a Lieutenant of Police.”—“Nor a King,” said His Majesty. “Ah! Sire,” replied he, “you remember the fog we had a few days ago, when we could not see four steps before us. Kings are commonly surrounded by still thicker fogs, collected around them by men of intriguing character, and faithless Ministers—all, of every class, unite in endeavouring to make things appear to Kings in any, light but the true one.” I heard this from the mouth of the famous Comte de St. Germain, as I was attending upon Madame, who was ill in bed. The King was there; and the Count, who was a welcome visitor, had been admitted. There were also present, M. de Gontaut, Madame de Brancas, and the Abbe de Bernis. I remember that the very same day, after the Count was gone out, the King talked in a style which gave Madame great pain. Speaking of the King of Prussia, he said, “That is a madman, who will risk all to gain all, and may, perhaps, win the game, though he has neither religion, morals, nor principles. He wants to make a noise in the world, and he will succeed. Julian, the Apostate, did the same.”—“I never saw the King so animated before,” observed Madame, when he was gone out; “and really the comparison with Julian, the Apostate, is not amiss, considering the irreligion of the King of Prussia. If he gets out of his perplexities, surrounded as he is by his enemies, he will be one of the greatest men in history.”

M. de Bernis remarked, “Madame is correct in her judgment, for she has no reason to pronounce his praises; nor have I, though I agree with what she says.” Madame de Pompadour never enjoyed so much influence as at the time when M. de Choiseul became one of the Ministry. From the time of the Abbe de Bernis she had afforded him her constant support, and he had been employed in foreign affairs, of which he was said to know but little. Madame made the Treaty of Sienna, though the first idea of it was certainly furnished her by the Abbe. I have been informed by several persons that the King often talked to Madame upon this subject; for my own part, I never heard any conversation relative to it, except the high praises bestowed by her on the Empress and the Prince de Kaunitz, whom she had

known a good deal of. She said that he had a clear head, the head of a statesman. One day, when she was talking in this strain, some one tried to cast ridicule upon the Prince on account of the style in which he wore his hair, and the four valets de chambre, who made the hair-powder fly in all directions, while Kaunitz ran about that he might only catch the superfine part of it. “Aye,” said Madame, “just as Alcibiades cut off his dog’s tail in order to give the Athenians something to talk about, and to turn their attention from those things he wished to conceal.”

Never was the public mind so inflamed against Madame de Pompadour as when news arrived of the battle of Rosbach. Every day she received anonymous letters, full of the grossest abuse; atrocious verses, threats of poison and assassination. She continued long a prey to the most acute sorrow, and could get no sleep but from opiates. All this discontent was excited by her protecting the Prince of Soubise; and the Lieutenant of Police had great difficulty in allaying the ferment of the people. The King affirmed that it was not his fault. M. du Verney was the confidant of Madame in everything relating to war; a subject which he well understood, though not a military man by, profession. The old Marechal de Noailles called him, in derision, the General of the flour, but Marechal Saxe, one day, told Madame that Du Verney knew more of military matters than the old Marshal. Du Verney once paid a visit to Madame de Pompadour, and found her in company with the King, the Minister of War, and two Marshals; he submitted to them the plan of a campaign, which was generally applauded. It was through his influence that M. de Richelieu was appointed to the command of the army, instead of the Marechal d’Estrdes. He came to Quesnay two days after, when I was with him. The Doctor began talking about the art of war, and I remember he said, “Military men make a great mystery of their art; but what is the reason that young Princes have always the most brilliant success? Why, because they are active and daring. When Sovereigns command their troops in person what exploits they perform! Clearly, because they are at liberty to run all risks.” These observations made a lasting impression on my mind.

The first physician came, one day, to see Madame he was talking of madmen and madness. The King was present, and everything relating to disease of any kind interested him. The first physician said that he could distinguish the symptoms of approaching madness six months beforehand. “Are there any persons about the Court likely to become mad?” said the King.—“I know one who will be imbecile in less than three months,” replied he. The King pressed him to tell the name. He excused himself for some time. At last he said, “It is M. de Sechelles, the Controller-General.”—“You have a spite against him,” said Madame, “because he would not grant what you asked”—“That is true,” said he, “but though that might possibly incline me to tell a disagreeable truth, it would not make me invent one. He is losing his intellects from debility. He affects gallantry at his age, and I perceive the connection in his ideas is becoming feeble and irregular.”—The King laughed; but three months afterwards he came to Madame, saying, “Sechelles gives evident proofs of dotage in the Council. We must appoint a successor to him.” Madame de Pompadour told me of this on the way to Choisy. Some time afterwards, the first physician came to see Madame, and spoke to her in private. “You are attached to M. Berryer, Madame,” said he, “and I am sorry to have to warn you that he will be attacked by madness, or by catalepsy, before long. I saw him this morning at chapel, sitting on one of those very low little chairs, which are only, meant to kneel upon. His knees touched his chin. I went to his house after Mass; his eyes were wild, and when his secretary spoke to him, he said, ‘Hold your tongue, pen. A pen’s business is to write, and not to speak.’” Madame, who liked the Keeper of the Seals, was very much concerned, and begged the first physician not to mention what he had perceived. Four days after this, M. Berryer was seized with catalepsy, after having talked incoherently. This is a disease which I did not know even by name, and got it written down for me. The patient remains in precisely

the same position in which the fit seizes him; one leg or arm elevated, the eyes wide open, or just as it may happen. This latter affair was known to all the Court at the death of the Keeper of the Seals.

When the Marechal de Belle-Isle's son was killed in battle, Madame persuaded the King to pay his father a visit. He was rather reluctant, and Madame said to him, with an air half angry, half playful:

———*"Barbare! don't l'orgueil*
Croit le sang d'un sujet trop pays d'un coup d'oeil."

The King laughed, and said, "Whose fine verses are those?"—"Voltaire's," said Madame ———.

"As barbarous as I am, I gave him the place of gentleman in ordinary, and a pension," said the King.

The King went in state to call on the Marshal, followed by all the Court; and it certainly appeared that this solemn visit consoled the Marshal for the loss of his son, the sole heir to his name.

When the Marshal died, he was carried to his house on a common hand-barrow, covered with a shabby cloth. I met the body. The bearers were laughing and singing. I thought it was some servant, and asked who it was. How great was my surprise at learning that these were the remains of a man abounding in honours and in riches. Such is the Court; the dead are always in fault, and cannot be put out of sight too soon.

The King said, "M. Fouquet is dead, I hear."—"He was no longer Fouquet," replied the Duc d'Ayen; "Your Majesty had permitted him to change that name, under which, however, he acquired all his reputation." The King shrugged his shoulders. His Majesty had, in fact, granted him letters patent, permitting him not to sign Fouquet during his Ministry. I heard this on the occasion in question. M. de Choiseul had the war department at his death. He was every day more and more in favour.

Madame treated him with greater distinction than any previous Minister, and his manners towards her were the most agreeable it is possible to conceive, at once respectful and gallant. He never passed a day without seeing her. M. de Marigny could not endure M. de Choiseul, but he never spoke of him, except to his intimate friends. Calling, one day, at Quesnay's, I found him there. They were talking of M. de Choiseul. "He is a mere 'petit maitre'," said the Doctor, "and, if he were handsome just fit to be one of Henri the Third's favourites." The Marquis de Mirabeau and M. de La Riviere came in. "This kingdom," said Mirabeau, "is in a deplorable state. There is neither national energy, nor the only substitute for it—money."—"It can only be regenerated," said La Riviere, "by a conquest, like that of China, or by some great internal convulsion; but woe to those who live to see that! The French people do not do things by halves." These words made me tremble, and I hastened out of the room. M. de Marigny did the same, though without appearing at all affected by what had been said. "You heard De La Riviere," said he,—"but don't be alarmed, the conversations that pass at the Doctor's are never repeated; these are honourable men, though rather chimerical. They know not where to stop. I think, however, they are in the right way; only, unfortunately, they go too far." I wrote this down immediately.

The Comte de St. Germain came to see Madame de Pompadour, who was ill, and lay on the sofa. He shewed her a little box, containing topazes, rubies, and emeralds. He appeared to have enough to furnish a treasury. Madame sent for me to see all these beautiful things. I looked at them with an air of the utmost astonishment, but I made signs to Madame that I

thought them all false. The Count felt for something in his pocketbook, about twice as large as a spectacle-case, and, at length, drew out two or three little paper packets, which he unfolded, and exhibited a superb ruby. He threw on the table, with a contemptuous air, a little cross of green and white stones. I looked at it and said, “That is not to be despised.” I put it on, and admired it greatly. The Count begged me to accept it. I refused—he urged me to take it. Madame then refused it for me. At length, he pressed it upon me so warmly that Madame, seeing that it could not be worth above forty Louis, made me a sign to accept it. I took the cross, much pleased at the Count’s politeness; and, some days after, Madame presented him with an enamelled box, upon which was the portrait of some Grecian sage (whose name I don’t recollect), to whom she compared him. I skewed the cross to a jeweller, who valued it at sixty-five Louis. The Count offered to bring Madame some enamel portraits, by Petitot, to look at, and she told him to bring them after dinner, while the King was hunting. He shewed his portraits, after which Madame said to him, “I have heard a great deal of a charming story you told two days ago, at supper, at M. le Premier’s, of an occurrence you witnessed fifty or sixty years ago.” He smiled and said, “It is rather long.”—“So much the better,” said she, with an air of delight. Madame de Gontaut and the ladies came in, and the door was shut; Madame made a sign to me to sit down behind the screen. The Count made many apologies for the ennui which his story would, perhaps, occasion. He said, “Sometimes one can tell a story pretty well; at other times it is quite a different thing.”

“At the beginning of this century, the Marquis de St. Gilles was Ambassador from Spain to the Hague. In his youth he had been particularly intimate with the Count of Moncade, a grandee of Spain, and one of the richest nobles of that country. Some months after the Marquis’s arrival at the Hague, he received a letter from the Count, entreating him, in the name of their former friendship, to render him the greatest possible service. ‘You know,’ said he, ‘my dear Marquis, the mortification I felt that the name of Moncade was likely to expire with me. At length, it pleased heaven to hear my prayers, and to grant me a son: he gave early promise of dispositions worthy of his birth, but he, some time since, formed an unfortunate and disgraceful attachment to the most celebrated actress of the company of Toledo. I shut my eyes to this imprudence on the part of a young man whose conduct had, till then, caused me unmingled satisfaction. But, having learnt that he was so blinded by passion as to intend to marry this girl, and that he had even bound himself by a written promise to that effect, I solicited the King to have her placed in confinement. My son, having got information of the steps I had taken, defeated my intentions by escaping with the object of his passion. For more than six months I have vainly endeavoured to discover where he has concealed himself, but I have now some reason to think he is at the Hague. The Count earnestly conjured the Marquis to make the most rigid search, in order to discover his son’s retreat, and to endeavour to prevail upon him to return to his home. ‘It is an act of justice,’ continued he, ‘to provide for the girl, if she consents to give up the written promise of marriage which she has received, and I leave it to your discretion to do what is right for her, as well as to determine the sum necessary to bring my son to Madrid in a manner suitable to his condition. I know not,’ concluded he, ‘whether you are a father; if you are, you will be able to sympathise in my anxieties.’ The Count subjoined to this letter an exact description of his son, and the young woman by whom he was accompanied.

“On the receipt of this letter, the Marquis lost not a moment in sending to all the inns in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague, but in vain—he could find no trace of them. He began to despair of success, when the idea struck him that a young French page of his, remarkable for his quickness and intelligence, might be employed with advantage. He promised to reward him handsomely if he succeeded in finding the young woman, who was the cause of so much anxiety, and gave him the description of her person. The page visited all

the public places for many days, without success; at length, one evening, at the play, he saw a young man and woman, in a box, who attracted his attention. When he saw that they, perceived he was looking at them, and withdrew to the back of the box to avoid his observation, he felt confident that they were the objects of his search. He did not take his eyes from the bog, and watched every movement in it. The instant the performance ended, he was in the passage leading from the boxes to the door, and he remarked that the young man, who, doubtless, observed the dress he wore, tried to conceal himself, as he passed him, by putting his handkerchief before his face. He followed him, at a distance, to the inn called the Vicomte de Turenne, which he saw him and the woman enter; and, being now certain of success, he ran to inform the Ambassador. The Marquis de St. Gilles immediately repaired to the inn, wrapped in a cloak, and followed by his page and two servants. He desired the landlord to show him to the room of a young man and woman, who had lodged for some time in his house. The landlord, for some time, refused to do so, unless the Marquis would give their name. The page told him to take notice that he was speaking to the Spanish Ambassador, who had strong reasons for wishing to see the persons in question. The innkeeper said they wished not to be known, and that they had absolutely forbidden him to admit anybody into their apartment who did not ask for them by name; but that, since the Ambassador desired it, he would show him their room. He then conducted them up to a dirty, miserable garret. He knocked at the door, and waited for some time; he then knocked again pretty, loudly, upon which the door was half-opened. At the sight of the Ambassador and his suite, the person who opened it immediately closed it again, exclaiming that they, had made a mistake. The Ambassador pushed hard against him, forced his way, in, made a sign to his people to wait outside, and remained in the room. He saw before him a very handsome young man, whose appearance perfectly, corresponded with the description, and a young woman, of great beauty, and remarkably fine person, whose countenance, form, colour of the hair, etc., were also precisely those described by the Count of Moncade. The young man spoke first. He complained of the violence used in breaking into the apartment of a stranger, living in a free country, and under the protection of its laws. The Ambassador stepped forward to embrace him, and said, ‘It is useless to feign, my dear Count; I know you, and I do not come here—to give pain to you or to this lady, whose appearance interests me extremely.’ The young man replied that he was totally mistaken; that he was not a Count, but the son of a merchant of Cadiz; that the lady was his wife; and, that they were travelling for pleasure. The Ambassador, casting his eyes round the miserably furnished room, which contained but one bed, and some packages of the shabbiest kind, lying in disorder about the room, ‘Is this, my dear child (allow me to address you by a title which is warranted by my tender regard for your father), is this a fit residence for the son of the Count of Moncade?’ The young man still protested against the use of any such language, as addressed to him. At length, overcome by the entreaties of the Ambassador, he confessed, weeping, that he was the son of the Count of Moncade, but declared that nothing should induce him to return to his father, if he must abandon a woman he adored. The young woman burst into tears, and threw herself at the feet of the Ambassador, telling him that she would not be the cause of the ruin of the young Count; and that generosity, or rather, love, would enable her to disregard her own happiness, and, for his sake, to separate herself from him. The Ambassador admired her noble disinterestedness. The young man, on the contrary, received her declaration with the most desperate grief. He reproached his mistress, and declared that he would never abandon so estimable a creature, nor suffer the sublime generosity of her heart to be turned against herself. The Ambassador told him that the Count of Moncade was far from wishing to render her miserable, and that he was commissioned to provide her with a sum sufficient to enable her to return into Spain, or to live where she liked. Her noble sentiments, and genuine tenderness, he said, inspired him with the greatest interest for her, and would induce him to

go to the utmost limits of his powers, in the sum he was to give her; that he, therefore, promised her ten thousand florins, that is to say, about twelve hundred Louis, which would be given her the moment she surrendered the promise of marriage she had received, and the Count of Moncade took up his abode in the Ambassador's house, and promised to return to Spain. The young woman seemed perfectly indifferent to the sum proposed, and wholly absorbed in her lover, and in the grief of leaving him. She seemed insensible to everything but the cruel sacrifice which her reason, and her love itself, demanded. At length, drawing from a little portfolio the promise of marriage, signed by the Count, 'I know his heart too well,' said she, 'to need it.' Then she kissed it again and again, with a sort of transport, and delivered it to the Ambassador, who stood by, astonished at the grandeur of soul he witnessed. He promised her that he would never cease to take the liveliest interest in her fate, and assured the Count of his father's forgiveness. 'He will receive with open arms,' said he, 'the prodigal son, returning to the bosom of his distressed family; the heart of a father is an exhaustless mine of tenderness. How great will be the felicity of my friend on the receipt of these tidings, after his long anxiety and affliction; how happy do I esteem myself, at being the instrument of that felicity?' Such was, in part, the language of the Ambassador, which appeared to produce a strong impression on the young man. But, fearing lest, during the night, love should regain all his power, and should triumph over the generous resolution of the lady, the Marquis pressed the young Count to accompany him to his hotel. The tears, the cries of anguish, which marked this cruel separation, cannot be described; they deeply touched the heart of the Ambassador, who promised to watch over the young lady. The Count's little baggage was not difficult to remove, and, that very evening, he was installed in the finest apartment of the Ambassador's house. The Marquis was overjoyed at having restored to the illustrious house of Moncade the heir of its greatness, and of its magnificent domains. On the following morning, as soon as the young Count was up, he found tailors, dealers in cloth, lace, stuffs, etc., out of which he had only to choose. Two valets de chambre, and three laquais, chosen by the Ambassador for their intelligence and good conduct, were in waiting in his antechamber, and presented themselves, to receive his orders. The Ambassador shewed the young Count the letter he had just written to his father, in which he congratulated him on possessing a son whose noble sentiments and striking qualities were worthy of his illustrious blood, and announced his speedy return. The young lady was not forgotten; he confessed that to her generosity he was partly indebted for the submission of her lover, and expressed his conviction that the Count would not disapprove the gift he had made her, of ten thousand florins. That sum was remitted, on the same day, to this noble and interesting girl, who left the Hague without delay. The preparations for the Count's journey were made; a splendid wardrobe and an excellent carriage were embarked at Rotterdam, in a ship bound for France, on board which a passage was secured for the Count, who was to proceed from that country to Spain. A considerable sum of money, and letters of credit on Paris, were given him at his departure; and the parting between the Ambassador and the young Count was most touching. The Marquis de St. Gilles awaited with impatience the Count's answer, and enjoyed his friend's delight by anticipation. At the expiration of four months, he received this long-expected letter. It would be utterly impossible to describe his surprise on reading the following words, 'Heaven, my dear Marquis, never granted me the happiness of becoming a father, and, in the midst of abundant wealth and honours, the grief of having no heirs, and seeing an illustrious race end in my person, has shed the greatest bitterness over my whole existence. I see, with extreme regret, that you have been imposed upon by a young adventurer, who has taken advantage of the knowledge he had, by some means, obtained, of our old friendship. But your Excellency must not be the sufferer. The Count of Moncade is, most assuredly, the person whom you wished to serve; he is bound to repay what your generous friendship hastened to advance, in order to procure him a happiness which he would

have felt most deeply. I hope, therefore, Marquis, that your Excellency will have no hesitation in accepting the remittance contained in this letter, of three thousand Louis of France, of the disbursal of which you sent me an account.'"

The manner in which the Comte de St. Germain spoke, in the characters of the young adventurer, his mistress, and the Ambassador, made his audience weep and laugh by turns. The story is true in every particular, and the adventurer surpasses Gusman d'Alfarache in address, according to the report of some persons present. Madame de Pompadour thought of having a play written, founded on this story; and the Count sent it to her in writing, from which I transcribed it.

M. Duclos came to the Doctor's, and harangued with his usual warmth. I heard him saying to two or three persons, "People are unjust to great men, Ministers and Princes; nothing, for instance, is more common than to undervalue their intellect. I astonished one of these little gentlemen of the corps of the infallibles, by telling him that I could prove that there had been more men of ability in the house of Bourbon, for the last hundred years, than in any other family."—"You prove that?" said somebody, sneeringly. "Yes," said Duclos; "and I will tell you how. The great Conde, you will allow, was no fool; and the Duchesse de Longueville is cited as one of the wittiest women that ever lived. The Regent was a man who had few equals, in every kind of talent and acquirement. The Prince de Conti, who was elected King of Poland, was celebrated for his intelligence, and, in poetry, was the successful rival of La Fare and St. Aulaire. The Duke of Burgundy was learned and enlightened. His Duchess, the daughter of Louis XIV., was remarkably clever, and wrote epigrams and couplets. The Duc du Maine is generally spoken of only for his weakness, but nobody had a more agreeable wit. His wife was mad, but she had an extensive acquaintance with letters, good taste in poetry, and a brilliant and inexhaustible imagination. Here are instances enough, I think," said he; "and, as I am no flatterer, and hate to appear one, I will not speak of the living." His hearers were astonished at this enumeration, and all of them agreed in the truth of what he had said. He added, "Don't we daily hear of silly D'Argenson, because he has a good-natured air, and a bourgeois tone? and yet, I believe, there have not been many Ministers comparable to him in knowledge and in enlightened views."[9]

I took a pen, which lay on the Doctor's table, and begged M. Duclos to repeat to me all the names he had mentioned, and the eulogium he had bestowed on each. "If," said he, "you show that to the Marquise, tell her how the conversation arose, and that I did not say it in order that it might come to her ears, and eventually, perhaps, to those of another person. I am an historiographer, and I will render justice, but I shall, also, often inflict it."—"I will answer for that," said the Doctor, "and our master will be represented as he really is. Louis XIV. liked verses, and patronised poets; that was very well, perhaps, in his time, because one must begin with something; but this age will be very superior to the last. It must be acknowledged that Louis XV., in sending astronomers to Mexico and Peru, to measure the earth, has a higher claim to our respect than if he directed an opera. He has thrown down the barriers which opposed the progress of philosophy, in spite of the clamour of the devotees: the Encyclopaedia will do honour to his reign." Duclos, during this speech, shook his head. I went away, and tried to write down all I had heard, while it was fresh. I had the part which

[9] *Rene LOUIS d'Argenson, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs. He was the author of 'Considerations sur le Gouvernement', and of several other works, from which succeeding political writers have drawn, and still draw ideas, which they give to the world as new. This man, remarkable not only for profound and original thinking, but for clear and forcible expression, was, nevertheless, D'Argenson la bete. It is said, however, that he affected the simplicity, and even silliness of manner, which procured him that appellation. If, as we hope, the unedited memoirs left by Rene d'Argenson will be given to the world, they will be found fully to justify the opinion of Duclos, with regard to this Minister, and the inappropriateness of his nickname.*

related to the Princes of the Bourbon race copied by a valet, who wrote a beautiful hand, and I gave it to Madame de Pompadour. But she said to me, “What! is Duclos an acquaintance of yours? Do you want to play the ‘bel esprit’, my dear good woman? That will not sit well upon you.” The truth is, that nothing can be further from my inclination. I told her that I met him accidentally at the Doctor’s, where he generally spent an hour when he came to Versailles. “The King knows him to be a worthy man,” said she.

Madame de Pompadour was ill, and the King came to see her several times a day. I generally left the room when he entered, but, having stayed a few minutes, on one occasion, to give her a glass of chicory water, I heard the King mention Madame d’Egmont. Madame raised her eyes to heaven, and said, “That name always recalls to me a most melancholy and barbarous affair; but it was not my fault.” These words dwelt in my mind, and, particularly, the tone in which they were uttered. As I stayed with Madame till three o’clock in the morning, reading to her a part of the time, it was easy for me to try to satisfy my curiosity. I seized a moment, when the reading was interrupted, to say, “You looked dreadfully shocked, Madame, when the King pronounced the name of D’Egmont.” At these words, she again raised her eyes, and said, “You would feel as I do, if you knew the affair.”—“It must, then, be deeply affecting, for I do not think that it personally concerns you, Madame.”—“No,” said she, “it does not; as, however, I am not the only person acquainted with this history, and as I know you to be discreet, I will tell it you. The last Comte d’Egmont married a reputed daughter of the Duc de Villars; but the Duchess had never lived with her husband, and the Comtesse d’Egmont is, in fact, a daughter of the Chevalier d’Orleans.—[Legitimate son of the Regent, Grand Prior of France.]—At the death of her husband, young, beautiful, agreeable, and heiress to an immense fortune, she attracted the suit and homage of all the most distinguished men at Court. Her mother’s director, one day, came into her room and requested a private interview; he then revealed to her that she was the offspring of an adulterous intercourse, for which her mother had been doing penance for five-and-twenty years. ‘She could not,’ said he, ‘oppose your former marriage, although it caused her extreme distress. Heaven did not grant you children; but, if you marry again, you run the risk, Madame, of transmitting to another family the immense wealth, which does not, in fact, belong to you, and which is the price of crime.’

“The Comtesse d’Egmont heard this recital with horror. At the same instant, her mother entered, and, on her knees, besought her daughter to avert her eternal damnation. Madame d’Egmont tried to calm her own and her mother’s mind. ‘What can I do?’ said she, to her. ‘Consecrate yourself wholly to God,’ replied the director, ‘and thus expiate your mother’s crime.’ The Countess, in her terror, promised whatever they asked, and proposed to enter the Carmelites. I was informed of it, and spoke to the King about the barbarous tyranny the Duchesse de Villars and the director were about to exercise over this unhappy young woman; but we knew not how to prevent it. The King, with the utmost kindness, prevailed on the Queen to offer her the situation of Lady of the Palace, and desired the Duchess’s friends to persuade her to endeavour to deter her daughter from becoming a Carmelite. It was all in vain; the wretched victim was sacrificed.”

Madame took it into her head to consult a fortuneteller, called Madame Bontemps, who had told M. de Bernis’s fortune, as I have already related, and had surprised him by her predictions. M. de Choiseul, to whom she mentioned the matter, said that the woman had also foretold fine things that were to happen to him. “I know it,” said she, “and, in return, you promised her a carriage, but the poor woman goes on foot still.” Madame told me this, and asked me how she could disguise herself, so as to see the woman without being known. I dared not propose any scheme then, for fear it should not succeed; but, two days after, I talked to her surgeon about the art, which some beggars practise, of counterfeiting sores, and altering their features. He said that was easy enough. I let the thing drop, and, after an interval

of some minutes, I said, “If one could change one’s features, one might have great diversion at the opera, or at balls. What alterations would it be necessary to make in me, now, to render it impossible to recognise me?”—“In the first place,” said he, “you must alter the colour of your hair, then you must have a false nose, and put a spot on some part of your face, or a wart, or a few hairs.” I laughed, and said, “Help me to contrive this for the next ball; I have not been to one for twenty years; but I am dying to puzzle somebody, and to tell him things which no one but I can tell him. I shall come home, and go to bed, in a quarter of an hour.”—“I must take the measure of your nose,” said he; “or do you take it with wax, and I will have a nose made: you can get a flaxen or brown wig.” I repeated to Madame what the surgeon had told me: she was delighted at it. I took the measure of her nose, and of my own, and carried them to the surgeon, who, in two days, gave me the two noses, and a wart, which Madame stuck under her left eye, and some paint for the eyebrows. The noses were most delicately made, of a bladder, I think, and these, with the ether disguises, rendered it impossible to recognize the face, and yet did not produce any shocking appearance. All this being accomplished, nothing remained but to give notice to the fortuneteller; we waited for a little excursion to Paris, which Madame was to take, to look at her house. I then got a person, with whom I had no connection, to speak to a waiting-woman of the Duchesse de Ruffec, to obtain an interview with the woman. She made some difficulty, on account of the Police; but we promised secrecy, and appointed the place of meeting. Nothing could be more contrary to Madame de Pompadour’s character, which was one of extreme timidity, than to engage in such an adventure. But her curiosity was raised to the highest pitch, and, moreover, everything was so well arranged that there was not the slightest risk. Madame had let M. de Gontaut, and her valet de chambre, into the secret. The latter had hired two rooms for his niece, who was then ill, at Versailles, near Madame’s hotel. We went out in the evening, followed by the valet de chambre, who was a safe man, and by the Duke, all on foot. We had not, at farthest, above two hundred steps to go. We were shown into two small rooms, in which were fires. The two men remained in one, and we in the other. Madame had thrown herself on a sofa. She had on a night-cap, which concealed half her face, in an unstudied manner. I was near the fire, leaning on a table, on which were two candles. There were lying on the chairs, near us, some clothes, of small value. The fortune-teller rang—a little servant-girl let her in, and then went to wait in the room where the gentlemen were. Coffee-cups, and a coffee-pot, were set; and I had taken care to place, upon a little buffet, some cakes, and a bottle of Malaga wine, having heard that Madame Bontemps assisted her inspiration with that liquor. Her face, indeed, sufficiently proclaimed it. “Is that lady ill?” said she, seeing Madame de Pompadour stretched languidly on the sofa. I told her that she would soon be better, but that she had kept her room for a week. She heated the coffee, and prepared the two cups, which she carefully wiped, observing that nothing impure must enter into this operation. I affected to be very anxious for a glass of wine, in order to give our oracle a pretext for assuaging her thirst, which she did, without much entreaty. When she had drunk two or three small glasses (for I had taken care not to have large ones), she poured the coffee into one of the two large cups. “This is yours,” said she; “and this is your friends’s; let them stand a little.” She then observed our hands and our faces; after which she drew a looking-glass from her pocket, into which she told us to look, while she looked at the reflections of our faces. She next took a glass of wine, and immediately threw herself into a fit of enthusiasm, while she inspected my cup, and considered all the lines formed by the dregs of the coffee she had poured out. She began by saying, “That is well—prosperity—but there is a black mark—distresses. A man becomes a comforter. Here, in this corner, are friends, who support you. Ah! who is he that persecutes them? But justice triumphs—after rain, sunshine—a long journey successful. There, do you see these little bags? That is money which has been paid—to you, of course, I mean. That is well. Do you see that arm?”—

“Yes.”—“That is an arm supporting something: a woman veiled; I see her; it is you. All this is clear to me. I hear, as it were, a voice speaking to me. You are no longer attacked. I see it, because the clouds in that direction are passed off (pointing to a clearer spot). But, stay—I see small lines which branch out from the main spot. These are sons, daughters, nephews—that is pretty well.” She appeared overpowered with the effort she was making. At length, she added, “That is all. You have had good luck first—misfortune afterward. You have had a friend, who has exerted himself with success to extricate you from it. You have had lawsuits—at length fortune has been reconciled to you, and will change no more.” She drank another glass of wine. “Your health, Madame,” said she to the Marquise, and went through the same ceremonies with the cup. At length, she broke out, “Neither fair nor foul. I see there, in the distance, a serene sky; and then all these things that appear to ascend all these things are applauses. Here is a grave man, who stretches out his arms. Do you see?—look attentively.”—“That is true,” said Madame de Pompadour, with surprise (there was, indeed, some appearance of the kind). “He points to something square that is an open coffer. Fine weather. But, look! there are clouds of azure and gold, which surround you. Do you see that ship on the high sea? How favourable the wind is! You are on board; you land in a beautiful country, of which you become the Queen. Ah! what do I see? Look there—look at that hideous, crooked, lame man, who is pursuing you—but he is going on a fool’s errand. I see a very great man, who supports you in his arms. Here, look! he is a kind of giant. There is a great deal of gold and silver—a few clouds here and there. But you have nothing to fear. The vessel will be sometimes tossed about, but it will not be lost. Dixi.” Madame said, “When shall I die, and of what disease?”—“I never speak of that,” said she; “see here, rather but fate will not permit it. I will shew you how fate confounds everything”—shewing her several confused lumps of the coffee-dregs. “Well, never mind as to the time, then, only tell me the kind of death.” The fortune-teller looked in the cup, and said, “You will have time to prepare yourself.” I gave her only two Louis, to avoid doing anything remarkable. She left us, after begging us to keep her secret, and we rejoined the Duc de Gontaut, to whom we related everything that had passed. He laughed heartily, and said, “Her coffee-dregs are like the clouds—you may see what you please in them.”

There was one thing in my horoscope which struck me, that was the comforter; because one of my uncles had taken great care of me, and had rendered me the most essential services. It is also true that I afterwards had an important lawsuit; and, lastly, there was the money which had come into my hands through Madame de Pompadour’s patronage and bounty. As for Madame, her husband was represented accurately enough by the man with the coffer; then the country of which she became Queen seemed to relate to her present situation at Court; but the most remarkable thing was the crooked and lame man, in whom Madame thought she recognized the Duc de V——-, who was very much deformed. Madame was delighted with her adventure and her horoscope, which she thought corresponded very remarkably with the truth. Two days after, she sent for M. de St. Florentin, and begged him not to molest the fortuneteller. He laughed, and replied that he knew why she interceded for this woman. Madame asked him why he laughed. He related every circumstance of her expedition with astonishing exactness;—[M. de St. Florentin was Minister for Paris, to whom the Lieutenant of Police was accountable.]—but he knew nothing of what had been said, or, at least, so he pretended. He promised Madame that, provided Bontemps did nothing which called for notice, she should not be obstructed in the exercise of her profession, especially if she followed it in secret. “I know her,” added he, “and I, like other people, have had the curiosity to consult her. She is the wife of a soldier in the guards. She is a clever woman in her way, but she drinks. Four or five years ago, she got such hold on the mind of Madame de Ruffec, that she made her believe she could procure her an elixir of beauty, which would restore her to what she was at twenty-five. The Duchess pays high for the drugs of which this elixir is

compounded; and sometimes they are bad: sometimes, the sun, to which they were exposed, was not powerful enough; sometimes, the influence of a certain constellation was wanting. Sometimes, she has the courage to assure the Duchess that she really is grown handsomer, and actually succeeds in making her believe it." But the history of this woman's daughter is still more curious. She was exquisitely beautiful, and the Duchess brought her up in her own house. Bontemps predicted to the girl, in the Duchess's presence, that she would marry a man of two thousand Louis a year. This was not very likely to happen to the daughter of a soldier in the guards. It did happen, nevertheless. The little Bontemps married the President Beaudouin, who was mad. But, the tragical part of the story is, that her mother had also foretold that she would die in childbirth of her first child, and that she did actually die in child-birth, at the age of eighteen, doubtless under a strong impression of her mother's prophecy, to which the improbable event of her marriage had given such extraordinary weight. Madame told the King of the adventure her curiosity had led her into, at which he laughed, and said he wished the Police had arrested her. He added a very sensible remark. "In order to judge," said he, "of the truth or falsehood of such predictions, one ought to collect fifty of them. It would be found that they are almost always made up of the same phrases, which are sometimes inapplicable, and some times hit the mark. But the first are rarely-mentioned, while the others are always insisted on."

I have heard, and, indeed, it is certainly true, that M. de Bridge lived on terms of intimacy with Madame, when she was Madame d'Aioles. He used to ride on horseback with her, and, as he is so handsome a man, that he has retained the name of the handsome man, it was natural enough that he should be thought the lover of a very handsome woman. I have heard something more than this. I was told that the King said to M. de Bridge, "Confess, now, that you were her lover. She has acknowledged it to me, and I exact from you this proof of sincerity." M. de. Bridge replied, that Madame de Pompadour was at liberty to say what she pleased for her own amusement, or for any other reason; but that he, for his part, could not assert a falsehood; that he had been, her friend; that she was a charming companion, and had great talents; that he delighted in her society; but that his intercourse with her had never gone beyond the bounds of friendship. He added, that her husband was present in all their parties, that he watched her with a jealous eye, and that he would not have suffered him to be so much with her if he had conceived the least suspicion of the kind. The King persisted, and told him he was wrong to endeavour to conceal a fact which was unquestionable. It was rumoured, also, that the Abbe de Bernis had been a favoured lover of hers. The said Abbe was rather a coxcomb; he had a handsome face, and wrote poetry. Madame de Pompadour was the theme of his gallant verses. He sometimes received the compliments of his friends upon his success with a smile which left some room for conjecture, although he denied the thing in words. It was, for some time, reported at Court that she was in love with the Prince de Beauvau: he is a man distinguished for his gallantries, his air of rank and fashion, and his high play; he is brother to the little Marechale: for all these reasons, Madame is very civil to him, but there is nothing marked in her behaviour. She knows, besides, that he is in love with a very agreeable woman.

Now that I am on the subject of lovers, I cannot avoid speaking of M. de Choiseul. Madame likes him better than any of those I have just mentioned, but he is not her lover. A lady, whom I know perfectly well, but whom I do not chose to denounce to Madame, invented a story about them, which was utterly false. She said, as I have good reason to believe, that one day, hearing the King coming, I ran to Madame's closet door; that I coughed in a particular manner; and that the King having, happily, stopped a moment to talk to some ladies, there was time to adjust matters, so that Madame came out of the closet with me and M. de Choiseul, as if we had been all three sitting together. It is very true that I went in to carry

something to Madame, without knowing that the King was come, and that she came out of the closet with M. de Choiseul, who had a paper in his hand, and that I followed her a few minutes after. The King asked M. de Choiseul what that paper was which he had in his hand. He replied that it contained the remonstrance from the Parliament.

Three or four ladies witnessed what I now relate, and as, with the exception of one, they were all excellent women, and greatly attached to Madame, my suspicions could fall on none but the one in question, whom I will not name, because her brother has always treated me with great kindness. Madame de Pompadour had a lively imagination and great sensibility, but nothing could exceed the coldness of her temperament. It would, besides, have been extremely difficult for her, surrounded as she was, to keep up an intercourse of that kind with any man. It is true that this difficulty would have been diminished in the case of an all-powerful Minister, who had constant pretexts for seeing her in private. But there was a much more decisive fact—M. de Choiseul had a charming mistress—the Princess de R———, and Madame knew it, and often spoke of her. He had, besides, some remains of liking for the Princess de Kinski, who followed him from Vienna. It is true that he soon after discovered how ridiculous she was. All these circumstances combined were, surely, sufficient to deter Madame from engaging in a love affair with the Duke; but his talents and agreeable qualities captivated her. He was not handsome, but he had manners peculiar to himself, an agreeable vivacity, a delightful gaiety; this was the general opinion of his character. He was much attached to Madame, and though this might, at first, be inspired by a consciousness of the importance of her friendship to his interest, yet, after he had acquired sufficient political strength to stand alone, he was not the less devoted to her, nor less assiduous in his attentions. He knew her friendship for me, and he one day said to me, with great feeling, “I am afraid, my dear Madame du Hausset, that she will sink into a state of complete dejection, and die of melancholy. Try to divert her.” What a fate for the favourite of the greatest monarch in existence! thought I.

One day, Madame de Pompadour had retired to her closet with M. Berryer. Madame d’Amblimont stayed with Madame de Gontaut, who called me to talk about my son. A moment after, M. de Gontaut came in and said, “D’Amblimont, who shall have the Swiss guards?”—“Stop a moment,” said she; “let me call my council——, M. de Choiseul.”—“That is not so very bad a thought,” said M. de Gontaut, “but I assure you, you are the first person who has suggested it.” He immediately left us, and Madame d’Amblimont said, “I’ll lay a wager he is going to communicate my idea to M. de Choiseul.” He returned very shortly, and, M. Berrier having left the room, he said to Madame de Pompadour, “A singular thought has entered d’Amblimont’s head.”—“What absurdity now?” said Madame. “Not so great an absurdity neither,” said he. “She says the Swiss guards ought to be given to M. de Choiseul, and, really, if the King has not positively promised M. de Soubise, I don’t see what he can do better.”—“The King has promised nothing,” said Madame, “and the hopes I gave him were of the vaguest kind. I only told him it was possible. But though I have a great regard for M. de Soubise, I do not think his merits comparable to those of M. de Choiseul.” When the King came in, Madame, doubtless, told him of this suggestion. A quarter of an hour afterwards, I went into the room to speak to her, and I heard the King say, “You will see that, because the Duc du Maine, and his children, had that place, he will think he ought to have it, on account of his rank as Prince (Soubise); but the Marechal de Bassompierre was not a Prince; and, by the bye, the Duc de Choiseul is his grandnephew; do you know that?”—“Your Majesty is better acquainted with the history of France than anybody,” replied Madame. Two days after this, Madame de said to me, “I have two great delights; M. de Soubise will not have the Swiss guards, and Madame de Marsan will be ready to burst with rage at it; this is the first: and M. de Choiseul will have them; this is the greatest.”

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[The whole of this passage is in a different handwriting.]

There was a universal talk of a young lady with whom the King was as much in love as it was possible for him to be. Her name was Romans. She was said to be a charming girl. Madame de Pompadour knew of the King's visits, and her confidantes brought her most alarming reports of the affair. The Marechale de Mirepoix, who had the best head in Madame's council, was the only one who encouraged her. "I do not tell you," said she, "that he loves you better than her; and if she could be transported hither by the stroke of a fairy's wand; if she could entertain him this evening at supper; if she were familiar with all his tastes, there would, perhaps, be sufficient reason for you to tremble for your power. But Princes are, above all, pre-eminently the slaves of habit. The King's attachment to you is like that he bears to your apartment, your furniture. You have formed yourself to his manners and habits; you know how to listen and reply to his stories; he is under no constraint with you; he has no fear of boring you. How do you think he could have resolution to uproot all this in a day, to form a new establishment, and to make a public exhibition of himself by so striking a change in his arrangements?" The young lady became pregnant; the reports current among the people, and even those at Court, alarmed Madame dreadfully. It was said that the King meant to legitimate the child, and to give the mother a title. "All that," said Madame de Mirepoix, "is in the style of Louis XIV.—such dignified proceedings are very unlike those of our master." Mademoiselle Romans lost all her influence over the King by her indiscreet boasting. She was even treated with harshness and violence, which were in no degree instigated by Madame. Her house was searched, and her papers seized; but the most important, those which substantiated the fact of the King's paternity, had been withdrawn. At length she gave birth to a son, who was christened under the name of Bourbon, son of Charles de Bourbon, Captain of Horse. The mother thought the eyes of all France were fixed upon her, and beheld in her son a future Duc du Maine. She suckled him herself, and she used to carry him in a sort of basket to the Bois de Boulogne. Both mother and child were covered with the finest laces. She sat down upon the grass in a solitary spot, which, however, was soon well known, and there gave suck to her royal babe. Madame had great curiosity to see her, and took me, one day, to the manufactory at Sevres, without telling me what she projected. After she had bought some cups, she said, "I want to go and walk in the Bois de Boulogne," and gave orders to the coachman to stop at a certain spot where she wished to alight. She had got the most accurate directions, and when she drew near the young lady's haunt she gave me her arm, drew her bonnet over her eyes, and held her pocket-handkerchief before the lower part of her face. We walked, for some minutes, in a path, from whence we could see the lady suckling her child. Her jet black hair was turned up, and confined by a diamond comb. She looked earnestly at us. Madame bowed to her, and whispered to me, pushing me by the elbow, "Speak to her." I stepped forward, and exclaimed, "What a lovely child!"—"Yes, Madame," replied she, "I must confess that he is, though I am his mother." Madame, who had hold of my arm, trembled, and I was not very firm. Mademoiselle Romans said to me, "Do you live in this neighbourhood?"—"Yes, Madame," replied I, "I live at Auteuil with this lady, who is just now suffering from a most dreadful toothache."—"I pity her sincerely, for I know that tormenting pain well." I looked all around, for fear any one should come up who might recognise us. I took courage to ask her whether the child's father was a handsome man. "Very handsome, and, if I told you his name, you would agree with me."—"I have the honour of knowing him, then, Madame?"—"Most probably you do." Madame, fearing, as I did, some rencontre, said a few words in a low tone, apologizing for having intruded upon her, and we took our leave. We looked behind us, repeatedly, to see if we were followed, and got into the carriage without being perceived. "It must be confessed

that both mother and child are beautiful creatures," said Madame—"not to mention the father; the infant has his eyes. If the King had come up while we were there, do you think he would have recognised us?"—"I don't doubt that he would, Madame, and then what an agitation I should have been in, and what a scene it would have been for the bystanders! and, above all, what a surprise to her!" In the evening, Madame made the King a present of the cups she had bought, but she did not mention her walk, for fear Mademoiselle Romans should tell him that two ladies, who knew him, had met her there such a day. Madame de Mirepoix said to Madame, "Be assured, the King cares very little about children; he has enough of them, and he will not be troubled with the mother or the son. See what sort of notice he takes of the Comte de I——-, who is strikingly like him. He never speaks of him, and I am convinced that he will never do anything for him. Again and again I tell you, we do not live under Louis XIV." Madame de Mirepoix had been Ambassadress to London, and had often heard the English make this remark.

Some alterations had been made in Madame de Pompadour's rooms, and I had no longer, as heretofore, the niche in which I had been permitted to sit, to hear Caffarelli, and, in later times, Mademoiselle Fel and Jeliotte. I, therefore, went more frequently to my lodgings in town, where I usually received my friends: more particularly when Madame visited her little hermitage, whither M. de Gontaut commonly accompanied her. Madame du Chiron, the wife of the Head Clerk in the War-Office, came to see me. "I feel," said she, "greatly embarrassed, in speaking to you about an affair, which will, perhaps, embarrass you also. This is the state of the case. A very poor woman, to whom I have sometimes given a little assistance, pretends to be a relation of the Marquise de Pompadour. Here is her petition." I read it, and said that the woman had better write directly to Madame, and that I was sure, if what she asserted was true, her application would be successful. Madame du Chiron followed my advice. The woman wrote she was in the lowest depth of poverty, and I learnt that Madame sent her six Louis until she could gain more accurate information as to the truth of her story. Colin, who was commissioned to take the money, made inquiries of M. de Malvoiain, a relation of Madame, and a very respectable officer. The fact was found to be as she had stated it. Madame then sent her a hundred louis, and promised her a pension of sixty louis a year. All this was done with great expedition, and Madame had a visit of thanks from her poor relation, as soon as she had procured decent clothes to come in. That day the King happened to come in at an unusual hour, and saw this person going out. He asked who it was. "It is a very poor relation of mine," replied Madame. "She came, then, to beg for some assistance?"—"No," said she. "What did she come for, then?"—"To thank me for a little service I have rendered her," said she, blushing from the fear of seeming to boast of her liberality. "Well," said the King; "since she is your relation, allow me to have the pleasure of serving her too. I will give her fifty louis a year out of my private purse, and, you know, she may send for the first year's allowance to-morrow." Madame burst into tears, and kissed the King's hand several times. She told me this three days afterwards, when I was nursing her in a slight attack of fever. I could not refrain from weeping myself at this instance of the King's kindness. The next day, I called on Madame du Chiron to tell her of the good fortune of her protege; I forgot to say that, after Madame had related the affair to me, I told her what part I had taken in it. She approved my conduct, and allowed me to inform my friend of the King's goodness. This action, which showed no less delicate politeness towards her than sensibility to the sufferings of the poor woman, made a deeper impression on Madame's heart than a pension of two thousand a year given to herself.

Madame had terrible palpitations of the heart. Her heart actually seemed to leap. She consulted several physicians. I recollect that one of them made her walk up and down the room, lift a weight, and move quickly. On her expressing some surprise, he said, "I do this to

ascertain whether the organ is diseased; in that case motion quickens the pulsation; if that effect is not produced, the complaint proceeds from the nerves." I repeated this to my oracle, Quesnay. He knew very little of this physician, but he said his treatment was that of a clever man. His name was Renard; he was scarcely known beyond the Marais. Madame often appeared suffocated, and sighed continually. One day, under pretence of presenting a petition to M. de Choiseul, as he was going out, I said, in a low voice, that I wished to see him a few minutes on an affair of importance to my mistress. He told me to come as soon as I pleased, and that I should be admitted. I told him that Madame was extremely depressed; that she gave way to distressing thoughts, which she would not communicate; that she, one day, said to me, "The fortune-teller told me I should have time to prepare myself; I believe it, for I shall be worn to death by melancholy." M. de Choiseul appeared much affected; he praised my zeal, and said that he had already perceived some indications of what I told him; that he would not mention my name, but would try to draw from her an explanation. I don't know what he said to her; but, from that time, she was much more calm. One day, but long afterwards, Madame said to M. de Gontaut, "I am generally thought to have great influence, but if it were not for M. de Choiseul, I should not be able to obtain a Cross of St. Louis."

The King and Madame de Pompadour had a very high opinion of Madame de Choiseul. Madame said, "She always says the right thing in the right place." Madame de Grammont was not so agreeable to them; and I think that this was to be attributed, in part, to the sound of her voice, and to her blunt manner of speaking; for she was said to be a woman of great sense, and devotedly attached to the King and Madame de Pompadour. Some people pretended that she tried to captivate the King, and to supplant Madame: nothing could be more false, or more ridiculously improbable. Madame saw a great deal of these two ladies, who were extremely attentive to her. She one day remarked to the Duc d'Ayen,—[Afterwards Marechal de Noaines.] that M. de Choiseul was very fond of his sisters. "I know it, Madame," said he, "and many sisters are the better for that."—"What do you mean?" said she. "Why," said he, "as the Duc de Choiseul loves his sister, it is thought fashionable to do the same; and I know silly girls, whose brothers formerly cared nothing about them, who are now most tenderly beloved. No sooner does their little finger ache, than their brothers are running about to fetch physicians from all corners of Paris. They flatter themselves that somebody will say, in M. de Choiseul's drawing-room, 'How passionately M. de ——— loves his sister; he would certainly die if he had the misfortune to lose her.'" Madame related this to her brother, in my presence, adding, that she could not give it in the Duke's comic manner. M. de Marigny said, "I have had the start of them all, without making so much noise; and my dear little sister knows that I loved her tenderly before Madame de Grammont left her convent. The Duc d'Ayen, however, is not very wrong; he has made the most of it in his lively manner, but it is partly true."—"I forgot," replied Madame, "that the Duke said, 'I want extremely to be in the fashion, but which sister shall I take up? Madame de Caumont is a devil incarnate, Madame de Villars drinks, Madame d'Armagnac is a bore, Madame de la Marck is half mad.'"—"These are fine family portraits, Duke," said Madame. The Duc de Gontaut laughed, during the whole of this conversation, immoderately. Madame repeated it, one day, when she kept her bed. M. de G——- also began to talk of his sister, Madame du Roure. I think, at least, that is the name he mentioned. He was very gay, and had the art of creating gaiety. Somebody said, he is an excellent piece of furniture for a favourite. He makes her laugh, and asks for nothing either for himself or for others; he cannot excite jealousy, and he meddles in nothing. He was called the White Eunuch. Madame's illness increased so rapidly that we were alarmed about her; but bleeding in the foot cured her as if by a miracle. The King watched her with the greatest solicitude; and I don't know whether his attentions did not contribute as much to the cure as the bleeding. M. de Choiseul remarked, some days

after, that she appeared in better spirits. I told him that I thought this improvement might be attributed to the same cause.

SECRET COURT MEMOIRS OF LOUIS XVI. AND THE ROYAL FAMILY OF FRANCE

Section 1. Introduction

I should consider it great presumption to intrude upon the public anything respecting myself, were there any other way of establishing the authenticity of the facts and papers I am about to present. To the history of my own peculiar situation, amid the great events I record, which made me the depositary of information and documents so important, I proceed, therefore, though reluctantly, without further preamble.

I was for many years in the confidential service of the Princesse de Lamballe, and the most important materials which form my history have been derived not only from the conversations, but the private papers of my lamented patroness. It remains for me to show how I became acquainted with Her Highness, and by what means the papers I allude to came into my possession.

Though, from my birth, and the rank of those who were the cause of it (had it not been from political motives kept from my knowledge), in point of interest I ought to have been very independent, I was indebted for my resources in early life to His Grace the late Duke of Norfolk and Lady Mary Duncan. By them I was placed for education in the Irish Convent, Rue du Bacq, Faubourg St. Germain, at Paris, where the immortal Sacchini, the instructor of the Queen, gave me lessons in music. Pleased with my progress, the celebrated composer, when one day teaching Marie Antoinette, so highly overrated to that illustrious lady my infant natural talents and acquired science in his art, in the presence of her very shadow, the Princesse de Lamballe, as to excite in Her Majesty an eager desire for the opportunity of hearing me, which the Princess volunteered to obtain by going herself to the convent next morning with Sacchini. It was enjoined upon the composer, as I afterwards learned, that he was neither to apprise me who Her Highness was, nor to what motive I was indebted for her visit. To this Sacchini readily agreed, adding, after disclosing to them my connections and situation, “Your Majesty will be, perhaps, still more surprised, when I, as an Italian, and her German master, who is a German, declare that she speaks both these languages like a native, though born in England; and is as well disposed to the Catholic faith, and as well versed in it, as if she had been a member of that Church all her life.”

This last observation decided my future good fortune: there was no interest in the minds of the Queen and Princess paramount to that of making proselytes to their creed.

The Princess, faithful to her promise, accompanied Sacchini. Whether it was chance, ability, or good fortune, let me not attempt to conjecture; but from that moment I became the protege of this ever-regretted angel. Political circumstances presently facilitated her introduction of me to the Queen. My combining a readiness in the Italian and German languages, with my knowledge of English and French, greatly promoted my power of being useful at that crisis, which, with some claims to their confidence of a higher order, made this august, lamented, injured pair more like mothers to me than mistresses, till we were parted by their murder.

The circumstances I have just mentioned show that to mere curiosity, the characteristic passion of our sex and so often its ruin, I am to ascribe the introduction, which was only prevented by events unparalleled in history from proving the most fortunate in my life as it is the most cherished in my recollection.

It will be seen, in the course of the following pages, how often I was employed on confidential missions, frequently by myself, and, in some instances, as the attendant of the Princess. The nature of my situation, the trust reposed in me, the commissions with which I

was honoured, and the affecting charges of which I was the bearer, flattered my pride and determined me to make myself an exception to the rule that “no woman can keep a secret.” Few ever knew exactly where I was, what I was doing, and much less the importance of my occupation. I had passed from England to France, made two journeys to Italy and Germany, three to the Archduchess Maria Christiana, Governess of the Low Countries, and returned back to France, before any of my friends in England were aware of my retreat, or of my ever having accompanied the Princess. Though my letters were written and dated at Paris, they were all forwarded to England by way of Holland or Germany, that no clue should be given for annoyances from idle curiosity. It is to this discreetness, to this inviolable secrecy, firmness, and fidelity, which I so early in life displayed to the august personages who stood in need of such a person, that I owe the unlimited confidence of my illustrious benefactress, through which I was furnished with the valuable materials I am now submitting to the public.

I was repeatedly a witness, by the side of the Princesse de Lamballe, of the appalling scenes of the bonnet rouge, of murders a la lanterne, and of numberless insults to the unfortunate Royal Family of Louis XVI., when the Queen was generally selected as the most marked victim of malicious indignity. Having had the honour of so often beholding this much injured Queen, and never without remarking how amiable in her manners, how condescendingly kind in her deportment towards every one about her, how charitably generous, and withal, how beautiful she was,—I looked upon her as a model of perfection. But when I found the public feeling so much at variance with my own, the difference became utterly unaccountable. I longed for some explanation of the mystery. One day I was insulted in the Tuileries, because I had alighted from my horse to walk there without wearing the national ribbon. On this I met the Princess: the conversation which grew out of my adventure emboldened me to question her on a theme to me inexplicable.

“What,” asked I, “can it be which makes the people so outrageous against the Queen?”

Her Highness condescended to reply in the complimentary terms which I am about to relate, but without answering my question.

“My dear friend!” exclaimed she, “for from this moment I beg you will consider me in that light, never having been blessed with children of my own, I feel there is no way of acquitting myself of the obligations you have heaped upon me, by the fidelity with which you have executed the various commissions entrusted to your charge, but by adopting you as one of my own family. I am satisfied with you, yes, highly satisfied with you, on the score of your religious principles; and as soon as the troubles subside, and we have a little calm after them, my father-in-law and myself will be present at the ceremony of your confirmation.”

The goodness of my benefactress silenced me gratitude would not allow me to persevere for the moment. But from what I had already seen of Her Majesty the Queen, I was too much interested to lose sight of my object,—not, let me be believed, from idle womanish curiosity, but from that real, strong, personal interest which I, in common with all who ever had the honour of being in her presence, felt for that much-injured, most engaging sovereign.

A propitious circumstance unexpectedly occurred, which gave me an opportunity, without any appearance of officious earnestness, to renew the attempt to gain the end I had in view.

I was riding in the carriage with the Princesse de Lamballe, when a lady drove by, who saluted my benefactress with marked attention and respect. There was something in the manner of the Princess, after receiving the salute, which impelled me, spite of myself, to ask who the lady was.

“Madame de Genlis,” exclaimed Her Highness, with a shudder of disgust, “that lamb’s face with a wolf’s heart, and a fog’s cunning.” Or, to quote her own Italian phrase which I have here translated, “colla faccia d’agnello, il cuore dun lupo, a la dritura della volpe.”

In the course of these pages the cause of this strong feeling against Madame de Genlis will be explained. To dwell on it now would only turn me aside from my narrative. To pursue my story, therefore:

When we arrived at my lodgings (which were then, for private reasons, at the Irish Convent, where Sacchini and other masters attended to further me in the accomplishments of the fine arts), “Sing me something,” said the Princess, “‘Cantate mi qualche cosa’, for I never see that woman” (meaning Madame de Genlis) “but I feel ill and out of humour. I wish it may not be the foreboding of some great evil!”

I sang a little rondo, in which Her Highness and the Queen always delighted, and which they would never set me free without making me sing, though I had given them twenty before it.[10]

Her Highness honoured me with even more than usual praise. I kissed the hand which had so generously applauded my infant talents, and said, “Now, my dearest Princess, as you are so kind and good-humoured, tell me something about the Queen!”

She looked at me with her eyes full of tears. For an instant they stood in their sockets as if petrified: and then, after a pause, “I cannot,” answered she in Italian, as she usually did, “I cannot refuse you anything. ‘Non posso neyarti niente’. It would take me an age to tell you the many causes which have conspired against this much-injured Queen! I fear none who are near her person will escape the threatening storm that hovers over our heads. The leading causes of the clamour against her have been, if you must know, Nature; her beauty; her power of pleasing; her birth; her rank; her marriage; the King himself; her mother; her imperfect education; and, above all, her unfortunate partialities for the Abbe Vermond; for the Duchesse de Polignac; for myself, perhaps; and last, but not least, the thorough, unsuspecting goodness of her heart!

“But, since you seem to be so much concerned for her exalted, persecuted Majesty, you shall have a Journal I myself began on my first coming to France, and which I have continued ever since I have been honoured with the confidence of Her Majesty, in graciously giving me that unlooked-for situation at the head of her household, which honour and justice prevent my renouncing under any difficulties, and which I never will quit but with my life!”

She wept as she spoke, and her last words were almost choked with sobs.

Seeing her so much affected, I humbly begged pardon for having unintentionally caused her tears, and begged permission to accompany her to the Tuileries.

“No,” said she, “you have hitherto conducted yourself with a profound prudence, which has insured you my confidence. Do not let your curiosity change your system. You shall have the Journal. But be careful. Read it only by yourself, and do not show it to any one. On these conditions you shall have it.”

I was in the act of promising, when Her Highness stopped me.

“I want no particular promises. I have sufficient proofs of your adherence to truth. Only answer me simply in the affirmative.”

I said I would certainly obey her injunctions most religiously.

[10] *The rondo I allude to was written by Sarti for the celebrated Marches! Lungi da to ben mio, and is the same in which he was so successful in England, when he introduced it in London in the opera of Giulo Sabino.*

She then left me, and directed that I should walk in a particular part of the private alleys of the Tuileries, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. I did so; and from her own hand I there received her private Journal.

In the following September of this same year (1792) she was murdered!

Journalising copiously, for the purpose of amassing authentic materials for the future historian, was always a favourite practice of the French, and seems to have been particularly in vogue in the age I mention. The press has sent forth whole libraries of these records since the Revolution, and it is notorious that Louis XV. left Secret Memoirs, written by his own hand, of what passed before this convulsion; and had not the papers of the Tuileries shared in the wreck of royalty, it would have been seen that Louis XVI. had made some progress in the memoirs of his time; and even his beautiful and unfortunate Queen had herself made extensive notes and collections for the record of her own disastrous career. Hence it must be obvious how one so nearly connected in situation and suffering with her much-injured mistress, as the Princesse de Lamballe, would naturally fall into a similar habit had she even no stronger temptation than fashion and example. But self-communion, by means of the pen, is invariably the consolation of strong feeling, and reflecting minds under great calamities, especially when their intercourse with the world has been checked or poisoned by its malice.

The editor of these pages herself fell into the habit of which she speaks; and it being usual with her benefactress to converse with all the unreserve which every honest mind shows when it feels it can confide, her humble attendant, not to lose facts of such importance, commonly made notes of what she heard. In any other person's hands the Journal of the Princess would have been incomplete; especially as it was written in a rambling manner, and was never intended for publication. But connected by her confidential conversations with me, and the recital of the events to which I personally bear testimony, I trust it will be found the basis of a satisfactory record, which I pledge myself to be a true one.

I do not know, however, that, at my time of life, and after a lapse of thirty years, I should have been roused to the arrangement of the papers which I have combined to form this narrative, had I not met with the work of Madame Campan upon the same subject.

This lady has said much that is true respecting the Queen; but she has omitted much, and much she has misrepresented: not, I dare say, purposely, but from ignorance, and being wrongly informed. She was often absent from the service, and on such occasions must have been compelled to obtain her knowledge at second-hand. She herself told me, in 1803, at Rouen, that at a very important epoch the peril of her life forced her from the seat of action. With the Princesse de Lamballe, who was so much about the Queen, she never had any particular connexion. The Princess certainly esteemed her for her devotedness to the Queen; but there was a natural reserve in the Princess's character, and a mistrust resulting from circumstances of all those who saw much company, as Madame Campan did. Hence no intimacy was encouraged. Madame Campan never came to the Princess without being sent for.

An attempt has been made since the Revolution utterly to destroy faith in the alleged attachment of Madame Campan to the Queen, by the fact of her having received the daughters of many of the regicides for education into her establishment at Rouen. Far be it from me to sanction so unjust a censure. Although what I mention hurt her character very much in the estimation of her former friends, and constituted one of the grounds of the dissolution of her establishment at Rouen, on the restoration of the Bourbons, and may possibly in some degree have deprived her of such aids from their adherents as might have made her work unquestionable, yet what else, let me ask, could have been done by one

dependent upon her exertions for support, and in the power of Napoleon's family and his emissaries? On the contrary, I would give my public testimony in favour of the fidelity of her feelings, though in many instances I must withhold it from the fidelity of her narrative. Her being utterly isolated from the illustrious individual nearest to the Queen must necessarily leave much to be desired in her record. During the whole term of the Princesse de Lamballe's superintendence of the Queen's household, Madame Campan never had any special communication with my benefactress, excepting once, about the things which were to go to Brussels, before the journey to Varennes; and once again, relative to a person of the Queen's household, who had received the visits of Petion, the Mayor of Paris, at her private lodgings. This last communication I myself particularly remember, because on that occasion the Princess, addressing me in her own native language, Madame Campan, observing it, considered me as an Italian, till, by a circumstance I shall presently relate, she was undeceived.

I should anticipate the order of events, and incur the necessity of speaking twice of the same things, were I here to specify the express errors in the work of Madame Campan. Suffice it now that I observe generally her want of knowledge of the Princesse de Lamballe; her omission of many of the most interesting circumstances of the Revolution; her silence upon important anecdotes of the King, the Queen, and several members of the first assembly; her mistakes concerning the Princesse de Lamballe's relations with the Duchesse de Polignac, Comte de Fersan, Mirabeau, the Cardinal de Rohan, and others; her great miscalculation of the time when the Queen's confidence in Barnave began, and when that of the Empress-mother in Rohan ended; her misrepresentation of particulars relating to Joseph II.; and her blunders concerning the affair of the necklace, and regarding the libel Madame Lamotte published in England, with the connivance of Calonne:—all these will be considered, with numberless other statements equally requiring correction in their turn. What she has omitted I trust I shall supply; and where she has gone astray I hope to set her right; that, between the two, the future biographer of my august benefactresses may be in no want of authentic materials to do full justice to their honoured memories.

I said in a preceding paragraph that I should relate a circumstance about Madame Campan, which happened after she had taken me for an Italian and before she was aware of my being in the service of the Princess.

Madame Campan, though she had seen me not only at the time I mention but before and after, had always passed me without notice. One Sunday, when in the gallery of the Tuileries with Madame de Stael, the Queen, with her usual suite, of which Madame Campan formed one, was going, according to custom, to hear Mass, Her Majesty perceived me and most graciously addressed me in German. Madame Campan appeared greatly surprised at this, but walked on and said nothing. Ever afterwards, however, she treated me whenever we met with marked civility.

Another edition of Boswell to those who got a nod from Dr. Johnson!

The reader will find in the course of this work that on the 2nd of August, 1792, from the kindness and humanity of my august benefactresses, I was compelled to accept a mission to Italy, devised merely to send me from the sanguinary scenes of which they foresaw they and theirs must presently become victims. Early in the following month the Princesse de Lamballe was murdered. As my history extends beyond the period I have mentioned, it is fitting I should explain the indisputable authorities whence I derived such particulars as I did not see.

A person, high in the confidence of the Princess, through the means of the honest coachman of whom I shall have occasion to speak, supplied me with regular details of whatever took place, till she herself, with the rest of the ladies and other attendants, being separated from the Royal Family, was immured in the prison of La Force. When I returned to Paris after this dire tempest, Madame Clery and her friend, Madame de Beaumont, a natural daughter of Louis XV., with Monsieur Chambon of Rheims, who never left Paris during the time, confirmed the correctness of my papers. The Madame Clery I mention is the same who assisted her husband in his faithful attendance upon the Royal Family in the Temple; and this exemplary man added his testimony to the rest, in the presence of the Duchesse de Guiche Grammont, at Pyrmont in Germany, when I there met him in the suite of the late sovereign of France, Louis XVIII., at a concert. After the 10th of August, I had also a continued correspondence: with many persons at Paris, who supplied me with thorough accounts of the succeeding horrors, in letters directed to Sir William Hamilton, at Naples, and by him forwarded to me. And in addition to all these high sources, many particular circumstances: have been disclosed to me by individuals, whose authority, when I have used it, I have generally affixed to the facts they have enabled me to communicate.

It now only remains for me to mention that I have endeavoured to arrange everything, derived either from the papers of the Princesse de Lamballe, or from her remarks, my own observation, or the intelligence of others, in chronological order. It will readily be seen by the reader where the Princess herself speaks, as I have invariably set apart my own recollections and remarks in paragraphs and notes, which are not only indicated by the heading of each chapter, but by the context of the passages themselves. I have also begun and ended what the Princess says with inverted commas. All the earlier part, of the work preceding her personal introduction proceeds principally from her pen or her lips: I have done little more than change it from Italian into English, and embody thoughts and sentiments that were often disjointed and detached. And throughout, whether she or others speak, I may safely say this work will be found the most circumstantial, and assuredly the most authentic, upon the subject of which it treats, of all that have yet been presented to the public of Great Britain. The press has been prolific in fabulous writings upon these times, which have been devoured with avidity. I hope John Bull is not so devoted to gilded foreign fictions as to spurn the unadorned truth from one of his downright countrywomen: and let me advise him en passant, not to treat us beauties of native growth with indifference at home; for we readily find compensation in the regard, patronage, and admiration of every nation in Europe. I am old now, and may speak freely.

I have no interest whatever in the work I submit but that of endeavouring to redeem the character of so many injured victims. Would to Heaven my memory were less acute, and that I could obliterate from the knowledge of the world and posterity the names of their infamous destroyers; I mean, not the executioners who terminated their mortal existence for in their miserable situation that early martyrdom was an act of grace—but I mean some, perhaps still living, who with foul cowardice, stabbing like assassins in the dark, undermined their fair fame, and morally murdered them, long before their deaths, by daily traducing virtues the slanderers never possessed, from mere jealousy of the glory they knew themselves incapable of deserving.

Montesquieu says, “If there be a God, He must be just!” That divine justice, after centuries, has been fully established on the descendants of the cruel, sanguinary conquerers of South America and its butchered harmless Emperor Montezuma and his innocent offspring, who are now teaching Spain a moral lesson in freeing themselves from its insatiable thirst for blood and wealth, while God Himself has refused that blessing to the Spaniards which they denied to the Americans! Oh, France! what hast thou not already suffered, and what hast thou not yet

to suffer, when to thee, like Spain, it shall visit their descendants even unto the fourth generation?

To my insignificant losses in so mighty a ruin perhaps I ought not to allude. I should not presume even to mention that fatal convulsion which shook all Europe and has since left the nations in that state of agitated undulation which succeeds a tempest upon the ocean, were it not for the opportunity it gives me to declare the bounty of my benefactresses. All my own property went down in the wreck; and the mariner who escapes only with his life can never recur to the scene of his escape without a shudder. Many persons are still living, of the first respectability, who well remember my quitting this country, though very young, on the budding of a brilliant career. Had those prospects been followed up they would have placed me beyond the caprice of fickle fortune. But the dazzling lustre of crown favours and princely patronage outweighed the slow, though more solid hopes of self-achieved independence. I certainly was then almost a child, and my vanity, perhaps, of the honour of being useful to two such illustrious personages got the better of every other sentiment. But now when I reflect, I look back with consternation on the many risks I ran, on the many times I stared death in the face with no fear but that of being obstructed in my efforts to serve, even with my life, the interests dearest to my heart—that of implicit obedience to these truly benevolent and generous Princesses, who only wanted the means to render me as happy and independent as their cruel destiny has since made me wretched and miserable! Had not death deprived me of their patronage I should have had no reason to regret any sacrifice I could have made for them, for through the Princess, Her Majesty, unasked, had done me the honour to promise me the reversion of a most lucrative as well as highly respectable post in her employ. In these august personages I lost my best friends; I lost everything—except the tears, which bathe the paper as I write tears of gratitude, which will never cease to flow to the memory of their martyrdom.

Section 2. Journal Commenced

“The character of Maria Theresa, the Empress-mother of Marie Antoinette, is sufficiently known. The same spirit of ambition and enterprise which had already animated her contentions with France in the latter part of her career impelled her to wish for its alliance. In addition to other hopes she had been encouraged to imagine that LOUIS XV. might one day aid her in recovering the provinces which the King of Prussia had violently wrested from her ancient dominions. She felt the many advantages to be derived from a union with her ancient enemy, and she looked for its accomplishment by the marriage of her daughter.

“Policy, in sovereigns, is paramount to every other consideration. They regard beauty as a source of profit, like managers of theatres, who, when a female candidate is offered, ask whether she is young and handsome,—not whether she has talent. Maria Theresa believed that her daughter’s beauty would prove more powerful over France than her own armies. Like Catharine II., her envied contemporary, she consulted no ties of nature in the disposal of her children,—a system more in character where the knout is the logician than among nations boasting higher civilization: indeed her rivalry with Catharine even made her grossly neglect their education. Jealous of the rising power of the North, she saw that it was the purpose of Russia to counteract her views in Poland and Turkey through France, and so totally forgot her domestic duties in the desire to thwart the ascendency of Catharine that she often suffered eight or ten days to go by without even seeing her children, allowing even the essential sources of instruction to remain unprovided. Her very caresses were scarcely given but for display, when the children were admitted to be shown to some great personage; and if they were overwhelmed with kindness, it was merely to excite a belief that they were the constant care and companions of her leisure hours. When they grew up they became the mere instruments of her ambition. The fate of one of them will show how their mother’s worldliness was rewarded.

“A leading object of Maria Theresa’s policy was the attainment of influence over Italy. For this purpose she first married one of the Archduchesses to the imbecile Duke of Parma. Her second manoeuvre was to contrive that Charles III. should seek the Archduchess Josepha for his younger son, the King of Naples. When everything had been settled, and the ceremony by proxy had taken place, it was thought proper to sound the Princess as to how far she felt inclined to aid her mother’s designs in the Court of Naples. ‘Scripture says,’ was her reply, ‘that when a woman is married she belongs to the country of her husband.’

“‘But the policy of State?’ exclaimed Maria Theresa.

“‘Is that above religion?’ cried the Princess.

“This unexpected answer of the Archduchess was so totally opposite to the views of the Empress that she was for a considerable time undecided whether she would allow her daughter to depart, till, worn out by perplexities, she at last consented, but bade the Archduchess, previous to setting off for this much desired country of her new husband, to go down to the tombs, and in the vaults of her ancestors offer up to Heaven a fervent prayer for the departed souls of those she was about to leave.

“Only a few days before that a Princess had been buried in the vaults—I think Joseph the Second’s second wife, who had died of the small-pox.

“The Archduchess Josepha obeyed her Imperial mother’s cruel commands, took leave of all her friends and relatives, as if conscious of the result, caught the same disease, and in a few days died!

“The Archduchess Carolina was now tutored to become her sister’s substitute, and when deemed adequately qualified was sent to Naples, where she certainly never forgot she was an Austrian nor the interest of the Court of Vienna. One circumstance concerning her and her mother fully illustrates the character of both. On the marriage, the Archduchess found that Spanish etiquette did not allow the Queen to have the honour of dining at the same table as the King. She apprised her mother. Maria Theresa instantly wrote to the Marchese Tenucei, then Prime Minister at the Court of Naples, to say that, if her daughter, now Queen of Naples, was to be considered less than the King her husband, she would send an army to fetch her back to Vienna, and the King might purchase a Georgian slave, for an Austrian Princess should not be thus humbled. Maria Theresa need not have given herself all this trouble, for before, the letter arrived the Queen of Naples had dismissed all the Ministry, upset the Cabinet of Naples, and turned out even the King himself from her bedchamber! So much for the overthrow of Spanish etiquette by Austrian policy. The King of Spain became outrageous at the influence of Maria Theresa, but there was no alternative.

“The other daughter of the Empress was married, as I have observed already, to the Duke of Parma for the purpose of promoting the Austrian strength in Italy against that of France, to which the Court of, Parma, as well as that of Modena, had been long attached.

“The fourth Archduchess, Marie Antoinette, being the youngest and most beautiful of the family, was destined for France. There were three older than Marie Antoinette; but she, being much lovelier than her sisters, was selected on account of her charms. Her husband was never considered by the contrivers of the scheme: he was known to have no sway whatever, not even in the choice of his own wife! But the character of Louis XV. was recollected, and calculations drawn from it, upon the probable power which youth and beauty might obtain over such a King and Court.

“It was during the time when Madame de Pompadour directed, not only the King, but all France with most despotic sway, that the union of the Archduchess Marie Antoinette with the grandson of Louis XV. was proposed. The plan received the warmest support of Choiseul, then Minister, and the ardent co-operation of Pompadour. Indeed it was to her, the Duc de Choiseul, and the Comte de Mercy, the whole affair may be ascribed. So highly was she flattered by the attention with which Maria Theresa distinguished her, in consequence of her zeal, by presents and by the title ‘dear cousin,’ which she used in writing to her, that she left no stone unturned till the proxy of the Dauphin was sent to Vienna, to marry Marie Antoinette in his name.

“All the interest by which this union was supported could not, however, subdue a prejudice against it, not only among many of the Court, the Cabinet, and the nation, but in the Royal Family itself. France has never looked with complacency upon alliances with the House of Austria: enemies to this one avowed themselves as soon as it was declared. The daughters of Louis XV. openly expressed their aversion; but the stronger influence prevailed, and Marie Antoinette became the Dauphine.

“Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, and afterwards of Sens, suggested the appointment of the Librarian of the College des Quatre Nations, the Abbe Vermond, as instructor to the Dauphine in French. The Abbe Vermond was accordingly despatched by Louis XV. to Vienna. The consequences of this appointment will be seen in the sequel. Perhaps not the least fatal of them arose from his gratitude to the Archbishop, who recommended him. Some

years afterwards, in influencing his pupil, when Queen, to help Brienne to the Ministry, he did her and her kingdom more injury than their worst foes. Of the Abbe's power over Marie Antoinette there are various opinions; of his capacity there is but one—he was superficial and cunning. On his arrival at Vienna he became the tool of Maria Theresa. While there, he received a salary as the daughter's tutor, and when he returned to France, a much larger one as the mother's spy. He was more ambitious to be thought a great man, in his power over his pupil, than a rich one. He was too Jesuitical to wish to be deemed rich. He knew that superfluous emoluments would soon have overthrown the authority he derived from conferring, rather than receiving favours; and hence he never soared to any higher post. He was generally considered to be disinterested. How far his private fortunes benefited by his station has never appeared; nor is it known whether, by the elevation of his friend and patron to the Ministry in the time of Louis XVI., he gained anything beyond the gratification of vanity, from having been the cause: it is probable he did not, for if he had, from the general odium against that promotion, no doubt it would have been exposed, unless the influence of the Queen was his protection, as it proved in so many cases where he grossly erred. From the first he was an evil to Marie Antoinette; and ultimately habit rendered him a necessary evil.

"The education of the Dauphine was circumscribed; though very free in her manners, she was very deficient in other respects; and hence it was she so much avoided all society of females who were better informed than herself, courting in preference the lively tittle-tattle of the other sex, who were, in turn, better pleased with the gaieties of youth and beauty than the more substantial logical witticisms of antiquated Court-dowagers. To this may be ascribed her ungovernable passion for great societies, balls, masquerades, and all kinds of public and private amusements, as well as her subsequent attachment to the Duchesse de Polignac, who so much encouraged them for the pastime of her friend and sovereign. Though naturally averse to everything requiring study or application, Marie Antoinette was very assiduous in preparing herself for the parts she performed in the various comedies, farces, and cantatas given at her private theatre; and their acquirement seemed to cost her no trouble. These innocent diversions became a source of calumny against her; yet they formed almost the only part of her German education, about which Maria Theresa had been particular: the Empress-mother deemed them so valuable to her children that she ordered the celebrated Metastasio to write some of his most sublime cantatas for the evening recreations of her sisters and herself. And what can more conduce to elegant literary knowledge, or be less dangerous to the morals of the young, than domestic recitation of the finest flights of the intellect? Certain it is that Marie Antoinette never forgot her idolatry of her master Metastasio; and it would have been well for her had all concerned in her education done her equal justice. The Abbe Vermond encouraged these studies; and the King himself afterwards sanctioned the translation of the works of his Queen's revered instructor, and their publication at her own expense, in a superb edition, that she might gratify her fondness the more conveniently by reciting them in French. When Marie Antoinette herself became a mother, and oppressed from the change of circumstances, she regretted much that she had not in early life cultivated her mind more extensively. 'What a resource,' would she exclaim, is a mind well stored against human casualties!' She determined to avoid in her own offspring the error, of which she felt herself the victim, committed by her Imperial mother, for whose fault, though she suffered, she would invent excuses. 'The Empress,' she would say, was left a young widow with ten or twelve children; she had been accustomed, even during the Emperor's life, to head her vast empire, and she thought it would be unjust to sacrifice to her own children the welfare of the numerous family which afterwards devolved upon her exclusive government and protection.'

"Most unfortunately for Marie Antoinette, her great supporter, Madame de Pompadour, died before the Archduchess came to France. The pilot who was to steer the young mariner safe

into port was no more, when she arrived at it. The Austrian interest had sunk with its patroness. The intriguers of the Court no sooner saw the King without an avowed favourite than they sought to give him one who should further their own views and crush the Choiseul party, which had been sustained by Pompadour. The licentious Duc de Richelieu was the pander on this occasion. The low, vulgar Du Barry was by him introduced to the King, and Richelieu had the honour of enthroning a successor to Pompadour, and supplying Louis XV. with the last of his mistresses. Madame de Grammont, who had been the royal confidante during the interregnum, gave up to the rising star. The effect of a new power was presently seen in new events. All the Ministers known to be attached to the Austrian interest were dismissed; and the time for the arrival of the young bride, the Archduchess of Austria, who was about to be installed Dauphine of France, was at hand, and she came to meet scarcely a friend, and many foes—of whom even her beauty, her gentleness, and her simplicity, were doomed to swell the phalanx."

Section 3

“On the marriage night, Louis XV. said gaily to the Dauphin, who was supping with his usual heartiness, ‘Don’t overcharge your stomach to-night.’

“‘Why, I always sleep best after a hearty supper,’ replied the Dauphin, with the greatest coolness.

“The supper being ended, he accompanied his Dauphine to her chamber, and at the door, with the greatest politeness, wished her a good night. Next morning, upon his saying, when he met her at breakfast, that he hoped she had slept well, Marie Antoinette replied, ‘Excellently well, for I had no one to disturb me!’

“The Princesse de Guemenee, who was then at the head of the household, on hearing the Dauphine moving very early in her apartment, ventured to enter it, and, not seeing the Dauphin, exclaimed, ‘Bless me! he is risen as usual!’—‘Whom do you mean?’ asked Marie Antoinette. The Princess misconstruing the interrogation, was going to retire, when the Dauphine said, ‘I have heard a great deal of French politeness, but I think I am married to the most polite of the nation!’—‘What, then, he is risen?’—‘No, no, no!’ exclaimed the Dauphine, ‘there has been no rising; he has never lain down here. He left me at the door of my apartment with his hat in his hand, and hastened from me as if embarrassed with my person!’

“After Marie Antoinette became a mother she would often laugh and tell Louis XVI. of his bridal politeness, and ask him if in the interim between that and the consummation he had studied his maiden aunts or his tutor on the subject. On this he would laugh most excessively.

“Scarcely was Marie Antoinette seated in her new country before the virulence of Court intrigue against her became active. She was beset on all sides by enemies open and concealed, who never slackened their persecutions. All the family of Louis XV., consisting of those maiden aunts of the Dauphin just adverted to (among whom Madame Adelaide was specially implacable), were incensed at the marriage, not only from their hatred to Austria, but because it had accomplished the ambition of an obnoxious favourite to give a wife to the Dauphin of their kingdom. On the credulous and timid mind of the Prince, then in the leading strings of this pious sisterhood, they impressed the misfortunes to his country and to the interest of the Bourbon family, which must spring from the Austrian influence through the medium of his bride. No means were left unessayed to steel him against her sway. I remember once to have heard Her Majesty remark to Louis XVI., in answer to some particular observations he made, ‘These, Sire, are the sentiments of our aunts, I am sure.’ And, indeed, great must have been their ascendency over him in youth, for up to a late date he entertained a very high respect for their capacity and judgment. Great indeed must it have been to have prevailed against all the seducing allurements of a beautiful and fascinating young bride, whose amiableness, vivacity, and wit became the universal admiration, and whose graceful manner of address few ever equalled and none ever surpassed; nay, even so to have prevailed as to form one of the great sources of his aversion to consummate the marriage! Since the death of the late Queen, their mother, these four Princesses (who, it was said, if old maids, were not so from choice) had received and performed the exclusive honours of the Court. It could not have diminished their dislike for the young and lovely new-comer to see themselves under the necessity of abandoning their dignities and giving up their

station. So eager were they to contrive themes of complaint against her, that when she visited them in the simple attire in which she so much delighted, ‘sans ceremonie’, unaccompanied by a troop of horse and a squadron of footguards, they complained to their father, who hinted to Marie Antoinette that such a relaxation of the royal dignity would be attended with considerable injury to French manufactures, to trade, and to the respect due to her rank. ‘My State and Court dresses,’ replied she, ‘shall not be less brilliant than those of any former Dauphine or Queen of France, if such be the pleasure of the King,—but to my grandpapa I appeal for some indulgence with respect to my undress private costume of the morning.

“It was dangerous for one in whose conduct so many prying eyes were seeking for sources of accusation to gratify herself even by the overthrow of an absurdity, when that overthrow might incur the stigma of innovation. The Court of Versailles was jealous of its Spanish inquisitorial etiquette. It had been strictly wedded to its pageantries since the time of the great Anne of Austria. The sagacious and prudent provisions of this illustrious contriver were deemed the ne plus ultra of royal female policy. A cargo of whalebone was yearly obtained by her to construct such stays for the Maids of Honour as might adequately conceal the Court accidents which generally—poor ladies!—befell them in rotation every nine months.

“But Marie Antoinette could not sacrifice her predilection for a simplicity quite English, to prudential considerations. Indeed, she was too young to conceive it even desirable. So much did she delight in being unshackled by finery that she would hurry from Court to fling off her royal robes and ornaments, exclaiming, when freed from them, ‘Thank Heaven, I am out of harness!’

“But she had natural advantages, which gave her enemies a pretext for ascribing this antipathy to the established fashion to mere vanity. It is not impossible that she might have derived some pleasure from displaying a figure so beautiful, with no adornment except its native gracefulness; but how great must have been the chagrin of the Princesses, of many of the Court ladies, indeed, of all in any way ungainly or deformed, when called to exhibit themselves by the side of a bewitching person like hers, unaided by the whalebone and horse-hair paddings with which they had hitherto been made up, and which placed the best form on a level with the worst? The prudes who practised illicitly, and felt the convenience of a guise which so well concealed the effect of their frailties, were neither the least formidable nor the least numerous of the enemies created by this revolution of costume; and the Dauphine was voted by common consent—for what greater crime could there be in France?—the heretic Martin Luther of female fashions! The four Princesses, her aunts, were as bitter against the disrespect with which the Dauphine treated the armour, which they called dress, as if they themselves had benefited by the immunities it could, confer.

“Indeed, most of the old Court ladies embattled themselves against Marie Antoinette’s encroachments upon their habits. The leader of them was a real medallion, whose costume, character, and notions spoke a genealogy perfectly antediluvian; who even to the latter days of Louis XV., amid a Court so irregular, persisted in her precision. So systematic a supporter of the antique could be no other than the declared foe of any change, and, of course, deemed the desertion of large sack gowns, monstrous Court hoops, and the old notions of appendages attached to them, for tight waists and short petticoats, an awful demonstration of the depravity of the time!—[The editor needs scarcely add, that the allusion of the Princess is to Madame de Noailles.]

“This lady had been first lady to the sole Queen of Louis XV. She was retained in the same station for Marie Antoinette. Her motions were regulated like clock-work. So methodical was she in all her operations of mind and body, that, from the beginning of the year to its end, she never deviated a moment. Every hour had its peculiar occupation. Her element was etiquette,

but the etiquette of ages before the flood. She had her rules even for the width of petticoats, that the Queens and Princesses might have no temptation to straddle over a rivulet, or crossing, of unroyal size.

“The Queen of Louis XV. having been totally subservient in her movements night and day to the wishes of the Comtesse de Noailles, it will be readily conceived how great a shock this lady must have sustained on being informed one morning that the Dauphine had actually risen in the night, and her ladyship not by to witness a ceremony from which most ladies would have felt no little pleasure in being spared, but which, on this occasion, admitted of no delay! Notwithstanding the Dauphine excused herself by the assurance of the urgency allowing no time to call the Countess, she nearly fainted at not having been present at that, which others sometimes faint at, if too near! This unaccustomed watchfulness so annoyed Marie Antoinette, that, determined to laugh her out of it, she ordered an immense bottle of hartshorn to be placed upon her toilet. Being asked what use was to be made of the hartshorn, she said it was to prevent her first Lady of Honour from falling into hysterics when the calls of nature were uncivil enough to exclude her from being of the party. This, as may be presumed, had its desired effect, and Marie Antoinette was ever afterwards allowed free access at least to one of her apartments, and leave to perform that in private which few individuals except Princesses do with parade and publicity.

“These things, however, planted the seeds of rancour against Marie Antoinette, which Madame de Noailles carried with her to the grave. It will be seen that she declared against her at a crisis of great importance. The laughable title of Madame Etiquette, which the Dauphine gave her, clung to her through life; though conferred only in merriment, it never was forgiven.

“The Dauphine seemed to be under a sort of fatality with regard to all those who had any power of doing her mischief either with her husband or the Court. The Duc de Vauguyon, the Dauphin’s tutor, who both from principle and interest hated everything Austrian, and anything whatever which threatened to lessen his despotic influence so long exercised over the mind of his pupil, which he foresaw would be endangered were the Prince once out of his leading-strings and swayed by a young wife, made use of all the influence which old courtiers can command over the minds they have formed (more generally for their own ends than those of uprightness) to poison that of the young Prince against his bride.

“Never were there more intrigues among the female slaves in the Seraglio of Constantinople for the Grand Signior’s handkerchief than were continually harassing one party against the other at the Court of Versailles. The Dauphine was even attacked through her own tutor, the Abbe Vermond. A cabal was got up between the Abbe and Madame Marsan, instructress of the sisters of Louis XVI. (the Princesses Clotilde and Elizabeth) upon the subject of education. Nothing grew out of this affair excepting a new stimulus to the party spirit against the Austrian influence, or, in other words, the Austrian Princess; and such was probably its purpose. Of course every trifle becomes Court tattle. This was made a mighty business of, for want of a worse. The royal aunts naturally took the part of Madame Marsan. They maintained that their royal nieces, the French Princesses, were much better educated than the German Archduchesses had been by the Austrian Empress. They attempted to found their assertion upon the embonpoint of the French Princesses. They said that their nieces, by the exercise of religious principles, obtained the advantage of solid flesh, while the Austrian Archduchesses, by wasting themselves in idleness and profane pursuits, grew thin and meagre, and were equally exhausted in their minds and bodies! At this the Abbe Vermond, as the tutor of Marie Antoinette, felt himself highly offended, and called on Comte de Mercy, then the Imperial Ambassador, to apprise him of the insult the Empire had received over the shoulders of the

Dauphine's tutor. The Ambassador gravely replied that he should certainly send off a courier immediately to Vienna to inform the Empress that the only fault the French Court could find with Marie Antoinette was her being not so unwieldy as their own Princesses, and bringing charms with her to a bridegroom, on whom even charms so transcendent could make no impression! Thus the matter was laughed off, but it left, ridiculous as it was, new bitter enemies to the cause of the illustrious stranger.

"The new favourite, Madame du Barry, whose sway was now supreme, was of course joined by the whole vitiated intriguing Court of Versailles. The King's favourite is always that of his parasites, however degraded. The politics of the De Pompadour party were still feared, though De Pompadour herself was no more, for Choiseul had friends who were still active in his behalf. The power which had been raised to crush the power that was still struggling formed a rallying point for those who hated Austria, which the deposed Ministry had supported; and even the King's daughters, much as they abhorred the vulgarity of Du Barry, were led, by dislike for the Dauphine, to pay their devotions to their father's mistress. The influence of the rising sun, Marie Antoinette, whose beauteous rays of blooming youth warmed every heart in her favour, was feared by the new favourite as well as by the old maidens. Louis XV. had already expressed a sufficient interest for the friendless royal stranger to awaken the jealousy of Du Barry, and she was as little disposed to share the King's affections with another, as his daughters were to welcome a future Queen from Austria in their palace. Mortified at the attachment the King daily evinced, she strained every nerve to raise a party to destroy his predilections. She called to her aid the strength of ridicule, than which no weapon is more false or deadly. She laughed at qualities she could not comprehend, and underrated what she could not imitate. The Duc de Richelieu, who had been instrumental to her good fortune, and for whom (remembering the old adage: when one hand washes the other both are made clean) she procured the command of the army—this Duke, the triumphant general of Mahon and one of the most distinguished noblemen of France, did not blush to become the secret agent of a depraved meretrix in the conspiracy to blacken the character of her victim! The Princesses, of course, joined the jealous Phryne against their niece, the daughter of the Caesars, whose only faults were those of nature, for at that time she could have no other excepting those personal perfections which were the main source of all their malice. By one considered as an usurper, by the others as an intruder, both were in consequence industrious in the quiet work of ruin by whispers and detraction.

"To an impolitic act of the Dauphine herself may be in part ascribed the unwonted virulence of the jealousy and resentment of Du Barry. The old dotard, Louis XV., was so indelicate as to have her present at the first supper of the Dauphine at Versailles. Madame la Marechale de Beaumont, the Duchesse de Choiseul, and the Duchesse de Grammont were there also; but upon the favourite taking her seat at table they expressed themselves very freely to Louis XV. respecting the insult they conceived offered to the young Dauphine, left the royal party, and never appeared again at Court till after the King's death. In consequence of this scene, Marie Antoinette, at the instigation of the Abbe Vermond, wrote to her mother, the Empress, complaining of the slight put upon her rank, birth, and dignity, and requesting the Empress would signify her displeasure to the Court of France, as she had done to that of Spain on a similar occasion in favour of her sister, the Queen of Naples.

"This letter, which was intercepted, got to the knowledge of the Court and excited some clamour. To say the worst, it could only be looked upon as an ebullition of the folly of youth. But insignificant as such matters were in fact, malignity converted them into the locust, which destroyed the fruit she was sent to cultivate.

“Maria Theresa, old fox that she was, too true to her system to retract the policy, which formerly, laid her open to the criticism of all the civilised Courts of Europe for opening the correspondence with De Pompadour, to whose influence she owed her daughter’s footing in France—a correspondence whereby she degraded the dignity of her sex and the honour of her crown—and at the same time suspecting that it was not her daughter, but Vermond, from private motives, who complained, wrote the following laconic reply to the remonstrance:

“‘Where the sovereign himself presides, no guest can be exceptionable.’

“Such sentiments are very much in contradiction with the character of Maria Theresa. She was always solicitous to impress the world with her high notion of moral rectitude. Certainly, such advice, however politic, ought not to have proceeded from a mother so religious as Maria Theresa wished herself to be thought; especially to a young Princess who, though enthusiastically fond of admiration, at least had discretion to see and feel the impropriety of her being degraded to the level of a female like Du Barry, and, withal, courage to avow it. This, of itself, was quite enough to shake the virtue of Marie Antoinette; or, at least, Maria Theresa’s letter was of a cast to make her callous to the observance of all its scruples. And in that vitiated, depraved Court, she too soon, unfortunately, took the hint of her maternal counsellor in not only tolerating, but imitating, the object she despised. Being one day told that Du Barry was the person who most contributed to amuse Louis XV., ‘Then,’ said she, innocently, ‘I declare myself her rival; for I will try who can best amuse my grandpapa for the future. I will exert all my powers to please and divert him, and then we shall see who can best succeed.’

“Du Barry was by when this was said, and she never forgave it. To this, and to the letter, her rancour may principally be ascribed. To all those of the Court party who owed their places and preferments to her exclusive influence, and who held them subject to her caprice, she, of course, communicated the venom.

“Meanwhile, the Dauphin saw Marie Antoinette mimicking the monkey tricks with which this low Sultana amused her dotard, without being aware of the cause. He was not pleased; and this circumstance, coupled with his natural coolness and indifference for a union he had been taught to deem impolitic and dangerous to the interests of France, created in his virtuous mind that sort of disgust which remained so long an enigma to the Court and all the kingdom, excepting his royal aunts, who did the best they could to confirm it into so decided an aversion as might induce him to impel his grandfather to annul the marriage and send the Dauphine back to Vienna.”

“After the Dauphin’s marriage, the Comte d’Artois and his brother Monsieur—[Afterwards Louis XVIII., and the former the present Charles X.]—returned from their travels to Versailles. The former was delighted with the young Dauphine, and, seeing her so decidedly neglected by her husband, endeavoured to console her by a marked attention, but for which she would have been totally isolated, for, excepting the old King, who became more and more enraptured with the grace, beauty, and vivacity of his young granddaughter, not another individual in the Royal Family was really interested in her favour. The kindness of a personage so important was of too much weight not to awaken calumny. It was, of course, endeavoured to be turned against her. Possibilities, and even probabilities, conspired to give a pretext for the scandal which already began to be whispered about the Dauphine and D’Artois. It would have been no wonder had a reciprocal attachment arisen between a virgin wife, so long neglected by her husband, and one whose congeniality of character pointed him out as a more desirable partner than the Dauphin. But there is abundant evidence of the perfect innocence of their intercourse. Du Barry was most earnest in endeavouring, from first to last, to establish its impurity, because the Dauphine induced the gay young Prince to join in

all her girlish schemes to tease and circumvent the favourite. But when this young Prince and his brother were married to the two Princesses of Piedmont, the intimacy between their brides and the Dauphine proved there could have been no doubt that Du Barry had invented a calumny, and that no feeling existed but one altogether sisterly. The three stranger Princesses were indeed inseparable; and these marriages, with that of the French Princess, Clotilde, to the Prince of Piedmont, created considerable changes in the coteries of Court.

"The machinations against Marie Antoinette could not be concealed from the Empress-mother. An extraordinary Ambassador was consequently sent from Vienna to complain of them to the Court of Versailles, with directions that the remonstrance should be supported and backed by the Comte de Mercy, then Austrian Ambassador at the Court of France. Louis XV. was the only person to whom the communication was news. This old dilettanti of the sex was so much engaged between his seraglio of the Parc-aux-cerfs and Du Barry that he knew less of what was passing in his palace than those at Constantinople. On being informed by the Austrian Ambassador, he sent an Ambassador of his own to Vienna to assure the Empress that he was perfectly satisfied of the innocent conduct of his newly acquired granddaughter.

"Among the intrigues within intrigues of the time I mention, there was one which shows that perhaps Du Barry's distrust of the constancy of her paramour, and apprehension from the effect on him of the charms of the Dauphine, in whom he became daily more interested, were not utterly without foundation. In this instance even her friend, the Duc de Richelieu, that notorious seducer, by lending himself to the secret purposes of the King, became a traitor to the cause of the King's favourite, to which he had sworn allegiance, and which he had supported by defaming her whom he now became anxious to make his Queen.

"It has already been said, that the famous Duchesse de Grammont was one of the confidential friends of Louis XV. before he took Du Barry under his especial protection. Of course, there can be no difficulty in conceiving how likely a person she would be, to aid any purpose of the King which should displace the favourite, by whom she herself had been obliged to retire, by ties of a higher order, to which she might prove instrumental.

"Louis XV. actually flattered himself with the hope of obtaining advantages from the Dauphin's coolness towards the Dauphine. He encouraged it, and even threw many obstacles in the way of the consummation of the marriage. The apartments of the young couple were placed at opposite ends of the palace, so that the Dauphin could not approach that of his Dauphine without a publicity which his bashfulness could not brook.

"Louis XV. now began to act upon his secret passion to supplant his grandson, and make the Dauphine his own Queen, by endeavouring to secure her affections to himself. His attentions were backed by gifts of diamonds, pearls, and other valuables, and it was at this period that Boehmer, the jeweller, first received the order for that famous necklace, which subsequently produced such dreadful consequences, and which was originally meant as a kingly present to the intended Queen, though afterwards destined for Du Barry, had not the King died before the completion of the bargain for it.

"The Queen herself one day told me, 'Heaven knows if ever I should have had the blessing of being a mother had I not one evening surprised the Dauphin, when the subject was adverted to, in the expression of a sort of regret at our being placed so far asunder from each other. Indeed, he never honoured me with any proof of his affection so explicit as that you have just witnessed'—for the King had that moment kissed her, as he left the apartment—'from the time of our marriage till the consummation. The most I ever received from him was a squeeze of the hand in secret. His extreme modesty, and perhaps his utter ignorance of the intercourse with woman, dreaded the exposure of crossing the palace to my bedchamber; and no doubt

the accomplishment would have occurred sooner, could it have been effectuated in privacy. The hint he gave emboldened me with courage, when he next left me, as usual, at the door of my apartment, to mention it to the Duchesse de Grammont, then the confidential friend of Louis XV., who laughed me almost out of countenance; saying, in her gay manner of expressing herself, "If I were as young and as beautiful a wife as you are I should certainly not trouble myself to remove the obstacle by going to him while there were others of superior rank ready to supply his place." Before she quitted me, however, she said: "Well, child, make yourself easy: you shall no longer be separated from the object of your wishes: I will mention it to the King, your grandpapa, and he will soon order your husband's apartment to be changed for one nearer your own." And the change shortly afterwards took place.

"'Here,' continued the Queen, 'I accuse myself of a want of that courage which every virtuous wife ought to exercise in not having complained of the visible neglect shown me long, long before I did; for this, perhaps, would have spared both of us the many bitter pangs originating in the seeming coldness, whence have arisen all the scandalous stories against my character—which have often interrupted the full enjoyment I should have felt had they not made me tremble for the security of that attachment, of which I had so many proofs, and which formed my only consolation amid all the malice that for yearn had been endeavouring to deprive me of it! So far as regards my husband's estimation, thank fate, I have defied their wickedness! Would to Heaven I could have been equally secure in the estimation of my people—the object nearest to my heart, after the King and my dear children!'"[11]

"The present period appears to have been one of the happiest in the life of Marie Antoinette. Her intimate society consisted of the King's brothers, and their Princesses, with the King's saint-like sister Elizabeth; and they lived entirely together, excepting when the Dauphine dined in public. These ties seemed to be drawn daily closer for some time, till the subsequent intimacy with the Polignacs. Even when the Comtesse d'Artois lay-in, the Dauphine, then become Queen, transferred her parties to the apartments of that Princess, rather than lose the gratification of her society.

"During all this time, however, Du Barry, the Duc d'Aiguillon, and the aunts-Princesses, took special care to keep themselves between her and any tenderness on the part of the husband Dauphin, and, from different motives uniting in one end, tried every means to get the object of their hatred sent back to Vienna."

[11] *The Dauphine could not understand the first allusion of the Duchess; but it is evident that the vile intriguer took this opportunity of sounding her upon what she was commissioned to carry on in favour of Louis XV., and it is equally apparent that when she heard Marie Antoinette express herself decidedly in favour of her young husband, and distinctly saw how utterly groundless were the hopes of his secret rival, she was led thereby to abandon her wicked project; and perhaps the change of apartments was the best mask that could have been devised to hide the villany.*

Section 4

“The Empress-mother was thoroughly aware of all that was going on. Her anxiety, not only about her daughter, but her State policy, which it may be apprehended was in her mind the stronger motive of the two, encouraged the machinations of an individual who must now appear upon the stage of action, and to whose arts may be ascribed the worst of the sufferings of Marie Antoinette.

“I allude to the Cardinal Prince de Rohan.

“At this time he was Ambassador at the Court of Vienna. The reliance the Empress placed on him favoured his criminal machinations against her daughter’s reputation. He was the cause of her sending spies to watch the conduct of the Dauphine, besides a list of persons proper for her to cultivate, as well as of those it was deemed desirable for her to exclude from her confidence.

“As the Empress knew all those who, though high in office in Versailles, secretly received pensions from Vienna, she could, of course, tell, without much expense of sagacity, who were in the Austrian interest. The Dauphine was warned that she was surrounded by persons who were not her friends.

“The conduct of Maria Theresa towards her daughter, the Queen of Naples, will sufficiently explain how much the Empress must have been chagrined at the absolute indifference of Marie Antoinette to the State policy which was intended to have been served in sending her to France. A less fitting instrument for the purpose could not have been selected by the mother. Marie Antoinette had much less of the politician about her than either of her surviving sisters; and so much was she addicted to amusement, that she never even thought of entering into State affairs till forced by the King’s neglect of his most essential prerogatives, and called upon by the Ministers themselves to screen them from responsibility. Indeed, the latter cause prevailed upon her to take her seat in the Cabinet Council (though she took it with great reluctance) long before she was impelled thither by events and her consciousness of its necessity. She would often exclaim to me: ‘How happy I was during the lifetime of Louis XV.! No cares to disturb my peaceful slumbers! No responsibility to agitate my mind! No fears of erring, of partiality, of injustice, to break in upon my enjoyments! All, all happiness, my dear Princess, vanishes from the bosom of a woman if she once deviate from the prescribed domestic character of her sex! Nothing was ever framed more wise than the Salique Laws, which in France and many parts of Germany exclude women from reigning, for few of us have that masculine capacity so necessary to conduct with impartiality and justice the affairs of State!’

“To this feeling of the impropriety of feminine interference in masculine duties, coupled with her attachment to France, both from principle and feeling, may be ascribed the neglect of her German connexions, which led to many mortifying reproaches, and the still more galling espionage to which she was subjected in her own palace by her mother. These are, however, so many proofs of the falsehood of the allegations by which she suffered so deeply afterwards, of having sacrificed the interests of her husband’s kingdom to her predilection for her mother’s empire.

“The subtle Rohan designed to turn the anxiety of Maria Theresa about the Dauphine to account, and he was also aware that the ambition of the Empress was paramount in Maria

Theresa's bosom to the love for her child. He was about to play a deep and more than double game. By increasing the mother's jealousy of the daughter, and at the same time enhancing the importance of the advantages afforded by her situation, to forward the interests of the mother, he, no doubt, hoped to get both within his power: for who can tell what wild expectation might not have animated such a mind as Rohan's at the prospect of governing not only the Court of France but that of Austria?—the Court of France, through a secret influence of his own dictation thrown around the Dauphine by the mother's alarm; and that of Austria, through a way he pointed out, in which the object that was most longed for by the mother's ambition seemed most likely to be achieved! While he endeavoured to make Maria Theresa beset her daughter with the spies I have mentioned, and which were generally of his own selection, he at the same time endeavoured to strengthen her impression of how important it was to her schemes to insure the daughter's co-operation. Conscious of the eagerness of Maria Theresa for the recovery of the rich province which Frederick the Great of Prussia had wrested from her ancient dominions, he pressed upon her credulity the assurance that the influence of which the Dauphine was capable over Louis XV., by the youthful beauty's charms acting upon the dotard's admiration, would readily induce that monarch to give such aid to Austria as must insure the restoration of what it lost. Silesia, it has been before observed, was always a topic by means of which the weak side of Maria Theresa could be attacked with success. There is generally some peculiar frailty in the ambitious, through which the artful can throw them off their guard. The weak and tyrannical Philip II., whenever the recovery of Holland and the Low Countries was proposed to him, was always ready to rush headlong into any scheme for its accomplishment; the bloody Queen Mary, his wife, declared that at her death the loss of Calais would be found engraven on her heart; and to Maria Theresa, Silesia was the Holland and the Calais for which her wounded pride was thirsting.

"But Maria Theresa was wary, even in the midst of the credulity of her ambition. The Baron de Neni was sent by her privately to Versailles to examine, personally, whether there was anything in Marie Antoinette's conduct requiring the extreme vigilance which had been represented as indispensable. The report of the Baron de Neni to his royal mistress was such as to convince her she had been misled and her daughter misrepresented by Rohan. The Empress instantly forbade him her presence.

"The Cardinal upon this, unknown to the Court of Vienna, and indeed, to every one, except his factotum, principal agent, and secretary, the Abbe Georgel, left the Austrian capital, and came to Versailles, covering his disgrace by pretended leave of absence. On seeing Marie Antoinette he fell enthusiastically in love with her. To gain her confidence he disclosed the conduct which had been observed towards her by the Empress, and, in confirmation of the correctness of his disclosure, admitted that he had himself chosen the spies which had been set on her. Indignant at such meanness in her mother, and despising the prelate, who could be base enough to commit a deed equally corrupt and uncalled for, and even thus wantonly betrayed when committed, the Dauphine suddenly withdrew from his presence, and gave orders that he should never be admitted to any of her parties.

"But his imagination was too much heated by a guilty passion of the blackest hue to recede; and his nature too presumptuous and fertile in expedients to be disconcerted. He soon found means to conciliate both mother and daughter; and both by pretending to manage with the one the self-same plot which, with the other, he was recommending himself by pretending to overthrow. To elude detection he interrupted the regular correspondence between the Empress and the Dauphine, and created a coolness by preventing the communications which would have unmasked him, that gave additional security to the success of his deception.

“By the most diabolical arts he obtained an interview with the Dauphine, in which he regained her confidence. He made her believe that he had been commissioned by her mother, as she had shown so little interest for the house of Austria, to settle a marriage for her sister, the Archduchess Elizabeth, with Louis XV. The Dauphine was deeply affected at the statement. She could not conceal her agitation. She involuntarily confessed how much she should deplore such an alliance. The Cardinal instantly perceived his advantage, and was too subtle to let it pass. He declared that, as it was to him the negotiation had been confided, if the Dauphine would keep her own counsel, never communicate their conversation to the Empress, but leave the whole matter to his management and only assure him that he was forgiven, he would pledge himself to arrange things to her satisfaction. The Dauphine, not wishing to see another raised to the throne over her head and to her scorn, under the assurance that no one knew of the intention or could prevent it but the Cardinal, promised him her faith and favour; and thus rashly fell into the springs of this wily intriguer.

“Exulting to find Marie Antoinette in his power, the Cardinal left Versailles as privately as he arrived there, for Vienna. His next object was to ensnare the Empress, as he had done her daughter; and by a singular caprice, fortune, during his absence, had been preparing for him the means.

“The Abbe Georgel, his secretary, by underhand manoeuvres, to which he was accustomed, had obtained access to all the secret State correspondence, in which the Empress had expressed herself fully to the Comte de Mercy relative to the views of Russia and Prussia upon Poland, whereby her own plans were much thwarted. The acquirement of copies of these documents naturally gave the Cardinal free access to the Court and a ready introduction once more to the Empress. She was too much committed by his possession of such weapons not to be most happy to make her peace with him; and he was too sagacious not to make the best use of his opportunity. To regain her confidence, he betrayed some of the subaltern agents, through whose treachery he had procured his evidences, and, in farther confirmation of his resources, showed the Empress several dispatches from her own Ministers to the Courts of Russia and Prussia. He had long, he said, been in possession of similar views of aggrandisement, upon which these Courts were about to act; and had, for a while, even incurred Her Imperial Majesty’s displeasure, merely because he was not in a situation fully to explain; but that he had now thought of the means to crush their schemes before they could be put in practice. He apprised her of his being aware that Her Imperial Majesty’s Ministers were actively carrying on a correspondence with Russia, with a view of joining her in checking the French co-operation with the Grand Signior; and warned her that if this design were secretly pursued, it would defeat the very views she had in sharing in the spoliation of Poland; and if openly, it would be deemed an avowal of hostilities against the Court of France, whose political system would certainly impel it to resist any attack upon the divan of Constantinople, that the balance of power in Europe might be maintained against the formidable ambition of Catherine, whose gigantic hopes had been already too much realised.

“Maria Theresa was no less astonished at these disclosures of the Cardinal than the Dauphine had been at his communication concerning her. She plainly saw that all her plans were known, and might be defeated from their detection.

“The Cardinal, having succeeded in alarming the Empress, took from his pocket a fabulous correspondence, hatched by his secretary, the Abbe Georgel. ‘There, Madame,’ said he, ‘this will convince Your Majesty that the warm interest I have taken in your Imperial house has carried me farther than I was justified in having gone; but seeing the sterility of the Dauphine, or, as it is reported by some of the Court, the total disgust the Dauphin has to consummate the marriage, the coldness of your daughter towards the interest of your Court, and the prospect

of a race from the Comtesse d'Artois, for the consequences of which there is no answering, I have, unknown to Your Imperial Majesty, taken upon myself to propose to LOUIS XV. a marriage with the Archduchess Elizabeth, who, on becoming Queen of France, will immediately have it in her power to forward the Austrian interest; for LOUIS XV., as the first proof of his affection to his young bride, will at once secure to your Empire the aid you stand so much in need of against the ambition of these two rising States. The recovery of Your Imperial Majesty's ancient dominions may then be looked upon as accomplished from the influence of the French Cabinet.

"The bait was swallowed. Maria Theresa was so overjoyed at this scheme that she totally forgot all former animosity against the Cardinal. She was encouraged to ascribe the silence of Marie Antoinette (whose letters had been intercepted by the Cardinal himself) to her resentment of this project concerning her sister; and the deluded Empress, availing herself of the pretended zeal of the Cardinal for the interest of her family, gave him full powers to return to France and secretly negotiate the alliance for her daughter Elizabeth, which was by no means to be disclosed to the Dauphine till the King's proxy should be appointed to perform the ceremony at Vienna. This was all the Cardinal wished for.

"Meanwhile, in order to obtain a still greater ascendency over the Court of France, he had expended immense sums to bribe secretaries and Ministers; and couriers were even stopped to have copies taken of all the correspondence to and from Austria.

"At the same crisis the Empress was informed by Prince Kaunitz that the Cardinal and his suite at the palace of the French Ambassador carried on such an immense and barefaced traffic of French manufactures of every description that Maria Theresa thought proper, in order to prevent future abuse, to abolish the privilege which gave to Ministers and Ambassadors an opportunity of defrauding the revenue. Though this law was levelled exclusively at the Cardinal, it was thought convenient under the circumstances to avoid irritating him, and it was consequently made general. But, the Comte de Mercy now obtaining some clue to his duplicity, an intimation was given to the Court at Versailles, to which the King replied, 'If the Empress be dissatisfied with the French Ambassador, he shall be recalled.' But though completely unmasked, none dared publicly to accuse him, each party fearing a discovery of its own intrigue. His official recall did not in consequence take place for some time; and the Cardinal, not thinking it prudent to go back till Louis XV. should be no more, lest some unforeseen discovery of his project for supplying her royal paramour with a Queen should rouse Du Barry to get his Cardinalship sent to the Bastille for life, remained fixed in his post, waiting for events.

"At length Louis XV. expired, and the Cardinal returned to Versailles. He contrived to obtain a private audience of the young Queen. He presumed upon her former facility in listening to him, and was about to betray the last confidence of Maria Theresa; but the Queen, shocked at the knowledge which she had obtained of his having been equally treacherous to her and to her mother, in disgust and alarm left the room without receiving a letter he had brought her from Maria Theresa, and without deigning to address a single word to him. In the heat of her passion and resentment, she was nearly exposing all she knew of his infamies to the King, when the coolheaded Princesse Elizabeth opposed her, from the seeming imprudence of such an abrupt discovery; alleging that it might cause an open rupture between the two Courts, as it had already been the source of a reserve and coolness, which had not yet been explained. The Queen was determined never more to commit herself by seeing the Cardinal. She accordingly sent for her mother's letter, which he himself delivered into the hands of her confidential messenger, who advised the Queen not to betray the Cardinal to the King, lest, in so doing, she should never be able to guard herself against the domestic spies, by whom,

perhaps, she was even yet surrounded! The Cardinal, conceiving, from the impunity of his conduct, that he still held the Queen in check, through the influence of her fears of his disclosing her weakness upon the subject of the obstruction she threw in the way of her sister's marriage, did not resign the hope of converting that ascendency to his future profit.

"The fatal silence to which Her Majesty was thus unfortunately advised I regret from the bottom of my soul! All the successive vile plots of the Cardinal against the peace and reputation of the Queen may be attributed to this ill-judged prudence! Though it resulted from an honest desire of screening Her Majesty from the resentment or revenge to which she might have subjected herself from this villain, who had already injured her in her own estimation for having been credulous enough to have listened to him, yet from this circumstance it is that the Prince de Rohan built the foundation of all the after frauds and machinations with which he blackened the character and destroyed the comfort of his illustrious victim. It is obvious that a mere exclusion from Court was too mild a punishment for such offences, and it was but too natural that such a mind as his, driven from the royal presence, and, of course, from all the noble societies to which it led (the anti-Court party excepted), should brood over the means of inveigling the Queen into a consent for his reappearance before her and the gay world, which was his only element, and if her favour should prove unattainable to revenge himself by her ruin.

"On the Cardinal's return to France, all his numerous and powerful friends beset the King and Queen to allow of his restoration to his embassy; but though on his arrival at Versailles, finding the Court had removed to Compiegne, he had a short audience there of the King, all efforts in his favour were thrown away. Equally unsuccessful was every intercession with the Empress-mother. She had become thoroughly awakened to his worthlessness, and she declared she would never more even receive him in her dominions as a visitor. The Cardinal, being apprised of this by some of his intimates, was at last persuaded to give up the idea of further importunity; and, pocketing his disgrace, retired with his hey dukes and his secretary, the Abbe Georgel, to whom may be attributed all the artful intrigues of his disgraceful diplomacy.

"It is evident that Rohan had no idea, during all his schemes to supplant the Dauphine by marrying her sister to the King, that the secret hope of Louis XV. had been to divorce the Dauphin and marry the slighted bride himself. Perhaps it is fortunate that Rohan did not know this. A brain so fertile in mischief as his might have converted such a circumstance to baneful uses. But the death of Louis XV. put an end to all the then existing schemes for a change in her position. It was to her a real, though but a momentary triumph. From the hour of her arrival she had a powerful party to cope with; and the fact of her being an Austrian, independent of the jealousy created by her charms, was, in itself, a spell to conjure up armies, against which she stood alone, isolated in the face of embattled myriads! But she now reared her head, and her foes trembled in her presence. Yet she could not guard against the moles busy in the earth secretly to undermine her. Nay, had not Louis XV. died at the moment he did, there is scarcely a doubt, from the number and the quality of the hostile influences working on the credulity of the young Dauphin, that Marie Antoinette would have been very harshly dealt with,—even the more so from the partiality of the dotard who believed himself to be reigning. But she has been preserved from her enemies to become their sovereign; and if her crowned brow has erewhile been stung by thorns in its coronal, let me not despair of their being hereafter smothered in yet unblown roses."

Section 5

“The accession of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette to the crown of France took place (May 10, 1774) under the most propitious auspices!

“After the long, corrupt reign of an old debauched Prince, whose vices were degrading to himself and to a nation groaning under the lash of prostitution and caprice, the most cheering changes were expected from the known exemplariness of his successor and the amiableness of his consort. Both were looked up to as models of goodness. The virtues of Louis XVI. were so generally known that all France hastened to acknowledge them, while the Queen’s fascinations acted like a charm on all who had not been invincibly prejudiced against the many excellent qualities which entitled her to love and admiration. Indeed, I never heard an insinuation against either the King or Queen but from those depraved minds which never possessed virtue enough to imitate theirs, or were jealous of the wonderful powers of pleasing that so eminently distinguished Marie Antoinette from the rest of her sex.

“On the death of Louis XV. the entire Court removed from Versailles to the palace of La Muette, situate in the Bois de Boulogne, very near Paris. The confluence of Parisians, who came in crowds joyfully to hail the death of the old vitiated Sovereign, and the accession of his adored successors, became quite annoying to the whole Royal Family. The enthusiasm with which the Parisians hailed their young King, and in particular his amiable young partner, lasted for many days. These spontaneous evidences of attachment were regarded as prognostics of a long reign of happiness. If any inference can be drawn from public opinion, could there be a stronger assurance than this one of uninterrupted future tranquility to its objects?

“To the Queen herself it was a double triumph. The conspirators, whose depravity had been labouring to make her their victim, departed from the scene of power. The husband, who for four years had been callous to her attractions, became awakened to them. A complete change in the domestic system of the palace was wrought suddenly. The young King, during the interval which elapsed between the death and the interment of his grandfather, from Court etiquette was confined to his apartments. The youthful couple therefore saw each other with less restraint. The marriage was consummated. Marie Antoinette from this moment may date that influence over the heart (would I might add over the head and policy!) of the King, which never slackened during the remainder of their lives.

“Madame du Barry was much better dealt with by the young King, whom she had always treated with the greatest levity, than she, or her numerous courtiers, expected. She was allowed her pension, and the entire enjoyment of all her ill-gotten and accumulated wealth; but, of course, excluded from ever appearing at Court, and politically exiled from Paris to the Chateau aux Dames.

“This implacable foe and her infamous coadjutors being removed from further interference in matters of State by the expulsion of all their own Ministers, their rivals, the Duc de Choiseul and his party, by whom Marie Antoinette had been brought to France, were now in high expectation of finding the direction of the Government, by the Queen’s influence, restored to that nobleman. But the King’s choice was already made. He had been ruled by his aunts, and appointed Ministers suggested by them and his late grandfather’s friends, who feared the preponderance of the Austrian influence. The three ladies, Madame la Marechale de

Beauveau, the Duchesse de Choiseul, and the Duchesse de Grammont, who were all well-known to Louis XVI. and stood high in his opinion for many excellent qualities, and especially for their independent assertion of their own and the Dauphine's dignity by retiring from Court in consequence of the supper at which Du Barry was introduced these ladies, though received on their return thither with peculiar welcome, in vain united their efforts with those of the Queen and the Abbe Vermond, to overcome the prejudice which opposed Choiseul's reinstatement. It was all in vain. The royal aunts, Adelaide especially, hated Choiseul for the sake of Austria, and his agency in bringing Marie Antoinette to France; and so did the King's tutor and governor, the Duc de Vauguyon, who had ever been hostile to any sort of friendship with Vienna; and these formed a host impenetrable even to the influence of the Queen, which was opposed by all the leaders of the prevailing party, who, though they were beginning externally to court, admire, and idolize her, secretly surrounded her by their noxious and viperous intrigues, and, while they lived in her bosom, fattened on the destruction of her fame!

"One of the earliest of the paltry insinuations against Marie Antoinette emanated from her not counterfeiting deep affliction at the decease of the old King. A few days after that event, the Court received the regular visits of condolence and congratulation of the nobility, whose duty prescribes their attendance upon such occasions; and some of them, among whom were the daughters of Louis XV., not finding a young Queen of nineteen hypocritically bathed in tears, on returning to their abodes declared her the most indecorous of Princesses, and diffused a strong impression of her want of feeling. At the head of these detractors were Mesdames de Guemenee and Marsan, rival pretenders to the favours of the Cardinal de Rohan, who, having by the death of Louis XV. lost their influence and their unlimited power to appoint and dismiss Ministers, themselves became ministers to their own evil geniuses, in calumniating her whose legitimate elevation annihilated their monstrous pretensions!

"The Abbe Vermond, seeing the defeat of the party of the Duc de Choiseul, by whom he had been sent to the Court of Vienna on the recommendation of Brienne, began to tremble for his own security. As soon as the Court had arrived at Choisy, and he was assured of the marriage having been consummated, he obtained, with the Queen's consent, an audience of the King, for the purpose of soliciting his sanction to his continuing in his situation. On submitting his suit to the King, His Majesty merely gave a shrug of the shoulders, and turned to converse with the Duc d'Aiguillon, who at that moment entered the room. The Abbe stood stupefied, and the Queen, seeing the crestfallen humour of her tutor, laughed and cheered him by remarking, 'There is more meaning in the shrug of a King than in the embrace of a Minister. The one always promises, but is seldom sincere; the other is generally sincere, but never promises.' The Abbe, not knowing how to interpret the dumb answer, finding the King's back turned and his conversation with D'Aiguillon continuing, was retiring with a shrug of his own shoulders to the Queen, when she exclaimed, good-humouredly, to Louis, laughing and pointing to the Abbe, 'Look! look! see how readily a Church dignitary can imitate the good Christian King, who is at the head of the Church.' The King, seeing the Abbe still waiting, said, dryly, 'Monsieur, you are confirmed in your situation,' and then resumed his conversation with the Duke.

"This anecdote is a sufficient proof that LOUIS XVI. had no prepossession in favour of the Abbe Vermond, and that it was merely not to wound the feelings of the Queen that he was tolerated. The Queen herself was conscious of this, and used frequently to say to me how much she was indebted to the King for such deference to her private choice, in allowing Vermond to be her secretary, as she did not remember the King's ever having held any communication with the Abbe during the whole time he was attached to the service, though the Abbe always expressed himself with the greatest respect towards the King.

“The decorum of Marie Antoinette would not allow her to endure those public exhibitions of the ceremony, of dressing herself which had been customary at Court. This reserve was highly approved by His Majesty; and one of the first reforms she introduced, after the accession, was in the internal discipline of her own apartment.

“It was during one of the visits, apart from Court etiquette, to the toilet of the Queen, that the Duchesse de Chartres, afterwards Duchesse d’Orleans, introduced the famous Mademoiselle Bertin, who afterwards became so celebrated as the Queen’s milliner—the first that was ever allowed to approach a royal palace; and it was months before Marie Antoinette had courage to receive her milliner in any other than the private apartment which, by the alteration Her Majesty had made in the arrangements of the household, she set apart for the purpose of dressing in comfort by herself and free from all intruders.

“Till then the Queen was not only very plain in her attire, but very, economical—a circumstance which, I have often heard her say, gave great umbrage to the other Princesses of the Court of Versailles, who never showed themselves, from the moment they rose till they returned to bed, except in full dress; while she herself made all her morning visits in a simple white cambric gown and straw hat. This simplicity, unfortunately, like many other trifles, whose consequences no foresight would have predicted, tended much to injure Marie Antoinette, not only with the Court dandies, but the nation; by whom, though she was always censured, she was as suddenly imitated in all she wore or did.

“From the private closet, which Marie Antoinette reserved to herself, and had now opened to her milliner, she would retire, after the great points of habiliment were accomplished, to those who were waiting with memorials at her public toilet, where the hairdresser would finish putting the ornaments in Her Majesty’s hair.

“The King made Marie Antoinette a present of Le Petit Trianon. Much has been said of the extravagant expense lavished by her upon this spot. I can only declare that the greater part of the articles of furniture which had not been worn out by time or were not worm or moth-eaten, and her own bed among them, were taken from the apartments of former Queens, and some of them had actually belonged to Anne of Austria, who, like Marie Antoinette, had purchased them out of her private savings. Hence it is clear that neither of the two Queens were chargeable to the State even for those little indulgences which every private lady of property is permitted from her husband, without coming under the lash of censure.

“Her allowance as Queen of France was no more than 300,000 francs. It is well known that she was generous, liberal, and very charitable; that she paid all her expenses regularly respecting her household, Trianon, her dresses, diamonds, millinery, and everything else; her Court establishment excepted, and some few articles, which were paid by the civil list. She was one of the first Queens in Europe, had the first establishment in Europe, and was obliged to keep up the most refined and luxurious Court in Europe; and all upon means no greater than had been assigned to many of the former bigoted Queens, who led a cloistered life, retired from the world without circulating their wealth among the nation which supplied them with so large a revenue; and yet who lived and died uncensured for hoarding from the nation what ought at least to have been in part expended for its advantage.

“And yet of all the extra expenditure which the dignity and circumstances of Marie Antoinette exacted, not a franc came from the public Treasury; but everything out of Her Majesty’s private purse and savings from the above three hundred thousand francs, which was an infinitely less sum than Louis XIV. had lavished yearly on the Duchesse de Montespan, and less than half what Louis XV. had expended on the last two favourites, De Pompadour and Du Barry. These two women, as clearly appeared from the private registers,

found among the papers of Louis XV. after his death, by Louis XVI. (but which, out of respect for the memory of his grandfather, he destroyed), these two women had amassed more property in diamonds and other valuables than all the Queens of France from the days of Catherine de Medicis up to those of Marie Antoinette.

"Such was the goodness of heart of the excellent Queen of Louis XVI., such the benevolence of her character, that not only did she pay all the pensions of the invalids left by her predecessors, but she distributed in public and private charities greater sums than any of the former Queens, thus increasing her expenses without any proportionate augmentation of her resources."[12]

NOTE:

[I must once more quit the journal of the Princess. Her Highness here ceases to record particulars of the early part of the reign of Louis XVI., and everything essential upon those times is too well known to render it desirable to detain the reader by an attempt to supply the deficiency. It is enough to state that the secret unhappiness of the Queen at not yet having the assurance of an heir was by no means weakened by the impatience of the people, nor by the accouchement of the Comtesse d'Artois of the Duc d'Angouleme. While the Queen continued the intimacy, and even held her parties at the apartments of the Duchess that she might watch over her friend, even in this triumph over herself, the poissardes grossly insulted her in her misfortune, and coarsely called on her to give heirs to the throne!

A consolation, however, for the unkind feeling of the populace was about to arise in the delights of one of her strongest friendships. I am come to the epoch when Her Majesty first formed an acquaintance with the Princesse de Lamballe.

After a few words of my own on the family of Her Highness, I shall leave her to pursue her beautiful and artless narrative of her parentage, early sorrows, and introduction to Her Majesty, unbroken.

The journal of the history of Marie Antoinette, after this slight interruption for the private history of her friend, will become blended with the journal of the Princesse de Lamballe, and both thenceforward will proceed in their course together, like their destinies, which from that moment never became disunited.]

[12] *Indeed, could Louis XVI. have foreseen—when, in order not to expose the character of his predecessor and to honour the dignity of the throne and monarchy of France, he destroyed the papers of his grandfather—what an arm of strength he would have possessed in preserving them, against the accusers of his unfortunate Queen and himself, he never could have thrown away such means of establishing a most honourable contrast between his own and former reigns. His career exhibits no superfluous expenditure. Its economy was most rigid. No sovereign was ever more scrupulous with the public money. He never had any public or private predilection; no dilapidated Minister for a favourite: no courtesan intrigue. For gaming he had no fondness; and, if his abilities were not splendid, he certainly had no predominating vices.*

Section 6

[MARIA THERESA LOUISA CARIGNAN, Princess of Savoy, was born at Turin on the 8th September, 1749. She had three sisters; two of them were married at Rome, one to the Prince Doria Pamfili, the other to the Prince Colonna; and the third at Vienna, to the Prince Lobkowitz, whose son was the great patron of the immortal Haydn, the celebrated composer.

The celebrated Haydn was, even at the age of 74, when I last saw him at Vienna, till the most good-humoured bon vivant of his age. He delighted in telling the origin of his good fortune, which he said he entirely owed to a bad wife.

When he was first married, he said, finding no remedy against domestic squabbles, he used to quit his bad half and go and enjoy himself with his good friends, who were Hungarians and Germans, for weeks together. Once, having returned home after a considerable absence, his wife, while he was in bed next morning, followed her husband's example: she did even more, for she took all his clothes, even to his shoes, stockings, and small clothes, nay, everything he had, along with her! Thus situated, he was under the necessity of doing something to cover his nakedness; and this, he himself acknowledged, was the first cause of his seriously applying himself to the profession which has since made his name immortal.

He used to laugh, saying, "I was from that time so habituated to study that my wife, often fearing it would injure me, would threaten me with the same operation if I did not go out and amuse myself; but then," added he, "I was grown old, and she was sick and no longer jealous." He spoke remarkably good Italian, though he had never been in Italy, and on my going to Vienna to hear his "Creation," he promised to accompany me back to Italy; but he unfortunately died before I returned to Vienna from Carlsbad.

She had a brother also, the Prince Carignan, who, marrying against the consent of his family, was no longer received by them; but the unremitting and affectionate attention which the Princesse de Lamballe paid to him and his new connexions was an ample compensation for the loss he sustained in the severity of his other sisters.

With regard to the early life of the Princesse de Lamballe, the arranger of these pages must now leave her to pursue her own beautiful and artless narrative unbroken, up to the epoch of her appointment to the household of the Queen. It will be recollected that the papers of which the reception has been already described in the introduction formed the private journal of this most amiable Princess; and those passages relating to her own early life being the most connected part of them, it has been thought that to disturb them would be a kind of sacrilege. After the appointment of Her Highness to the superintendence of the Queen's household, her manuscripts again become confused, and fall into scraps and fragments, which will require to be once more rendered clear by the recollections of events and conversations by which the preceding chapters have been assisted.]

"I was the favourite child of a numerous family, and intended, almost at my birth—as is generally the case among Princes who are nearly allied to crowned heads—to be united to one of the Princes, my near relation, of the royal house of Sardinia.

"A few years after this, the Duc and Duchesse de Penthievre arrived at Turin, on their way to Italy, for the purpose of visiting the different Courts, to make suitable marriage contracts for both their infant children.

“These two children were Mademoiselle de Penthievre, afterwards the unhappy Duchesse d’Orleans, and their idolised son, the Prince de Lamballe.[13]

“Happy would it have been both for the Prince who was destined to the former and the Princess who was given to the latter, had these unfortunate alliances never taken place.

“The Duc and Duchesse de Penthievre became so singularly attached to my beloved parents, and, in particular, to myself, that the very day they first dined at the Court of Turin, they mentioned the wish they had formed of uniting me to their young son, the Prince de Lamballe.

“The King of Sardinia, as the head of the house of Savoy and Carignan, said there had been some conversation as to my becoming a member of his royal family; but as I was so very young at the time, many political reasons might arise to create motives for a change in the projected alliance. ‘If, therefore, the Prince de Carignan,’ said the King, ‘be anxious to settle his daughter’s marriage, by any immediate matrimonial alliance, I certainly shall not avail myself of any prior engagement, nor oppose any obstacle in the way of its solemnisation.’

“The consent of the King being thus unexpectedly obtained by the Prince, so desirable did the arrangement seem to the Duke and Duchess that the next day the contract was concluded with my parents for my becoming the wife of their only son, the Prince de Lamballe.

“I was too young to be consulted. Perhaps had I been older the result would have been the same, for it generally happens in these great family alliances that the parties most interested, and whose happiness is most concerned, are the least thought of. The Prince was, I believe, at Paris, under the tuition of his governess, and I was in the nursery, heedless, and totally ignorant of my future good or evil destination!

“So truly happy and domestic a life as that led by the Duc and Duchesse de Penthievre seemed to my family to offer an example too propitious not to secure to me a degree of felicity with a private Prince, very rarely the result of royal unions! Of course, their consent was given with alacrity. When I was called upon to do homage to my future parents, I had so little idea, from my extreme youthfulness, of what was going on that I set them all laughing, when, on being asked if I should like to become the consort of the Prince de Lamballe, I said, ‘Yes, I am very fond of music!’ No, my dear,’ resumed the good and tender-hearted Duc de Penthievre, ‘I mean, would you have any objection to become his wife?’—‘No, nor any other person’s!’ was the innocent reply, which increased the mirth of all the guests at my expense.

“Happy, happy days of youthful, thoughtless innocence, luxuriously felt and appreciated under the thatched roof of the cottage, but unknown and unattainable beneath the massive pile of a royal palace and a gemmed crown! Scarcely had I entered my teens when my adopted parents strewed flowers of the sweetest fragrance to lead me to the sacred altar, that promised the bliss of busses, but which, too soon, from the foul machinations of envy, jealousy, avarice, and a still more criminal passion, proved to me the altar of my sacrifice!

“My misery and my uninterrupted grief may be dated from the day my beloved sister-in-law, Mademoiselle de Penthievre, sullied her hand by its union with the Duc de Chartres.—[Afterwards Duc d’Orleans, and the celebrated revolutionary Philippe Egalite.]—From that

[13] *The father of Louis Alexander Joseph Stanislaus de Bourbon Penthievre, Prince de Lamballe, was the son of Comte de Toulouse, himself a natural son of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, who was considered as the most wealthy of all the natural children, in consequence of Madame de Montespan having artfully entrapped the famous Mademoiselle de Moutpensier to make over her immense fortune to him as her heir after her death, as the price of liberating her husband from imprisonment in the Bastille, and herself from a ruinous prosecution, for having contracted this marriage contrary to the express commands of her royal cousin, Louis XIV.—Vide Histoire de Louis XIV. par Voltaire.*

moment all comfort, all prospect of connubial happiness, left my young and affectionate heart, plucked thence by the very roots, never more again to bloom there. Religion and philosophy were the only remedies remaining.

"I was a bride when an infant, a wife before I was a woman, a widow before I was a mother, or had the prospect of becoming one! Our union was, perhaps, an exception to the general rule. We became insensibly the more attached to each other the more we were acquainted, which rendered the more severe the separation, when we were torn asunder never to meet again in this world!

"After I left Turin, though everything for my reception at the palaces of Toulouse and Rambouillet had been prepared in the most sumptuous style of magnificence, yet such was my agitation that I remained convulsively speechless for many hours, and all the affectionate attention of the family of the Duc de Penthievre could not calm my feelings.

"Among those who came about me was the bridegroom himself, whom I had never yet seen. So anxious was he to have his first acquaintance incognito that he set off from Paris the moment he was apprised of my arrival in France and presented himself as the Prince's page. As he had outgrown the figure of his portrait, I received him as such; but the Prince, being better pleased with me than he had apprehended he should be, could scarcely avoid discovering himself. During our journey to Paris I myself disclosed the interest with which the supposed page had inspired me. 'I hope,' exclaimed I, 'my Prince will allow his page to attend me, for I like him much.'

"What was my surprise when the Duc de Penthievre presented me to the Prince and I found in him the page for whom I had already felt such an interest! We both laughed and wanted words to express our mutual sentiments. This was really love at first sight.[14]

"The Duc de Chartres, then possessing a very handsome person and most insinuating address, soon gained the affections of the amiable Mademoiselle Penthievre. Becoming thus a member of the same family, he paid me the most assiduous attention. From my being his sister-in-law, and knowing he was aware of my great attachment to his young wife, I could have no idea that his views were criminally levelled at my honour, my happiness, and my future peace of mind. How, therefore, was I astonished and shocked when he discovered to me his desire to supplant the legitimate object of my affections, whose love for me equalled mine for him! I did not expose this baseness of the Duc de Chartres, out of filial affection for my adopted father, the Duc de Penthievre; out of the love I bore his amiable daughter, she being pregnant; and, above all, in consequence of the fear I was under of compromising the life of the Prince, my husband, who I apprehended might be lost to me if I did not suffer in silence. But still, through my silence he was lost—and oh, how dreadfully! The Prince was totally in the dark as to the real character of his brother-in-law. He blindly became every day more and more attached to the man, who was then endeavouring by the foulest means to blast the fairest prospects of his future happiness in life! But my guardian angel protected me from

[14] *The young Prince was enraptured at finding his lovely bride so superior in personal charms to the description which had been given of her, and even to the portrait sent to him from Turin. Indeed, she must have been a most beautiful creature, for when I left her in the year 1792, though then five-and-forty years of age, from the freshness of her complexion, the elegance of her figure, and the dignity of her deportment, she certainly did not appear to be more than thirty. She had a fine head of hair, and she took great pleasure in showing it unornamented. I remember one day, on her coming hastily from the bath, as she was putting on her dress, her cap falling off, her hair completely covered her! The circumstances of her death always make me shudder at the recollection of this incident! I have been assured by Mesdames Mackau, de Soucle, the Comtesse de Noailles (not Duchesse, as Mademoiselle Bertin has created her in her Memoirs of that name), and others, that the Princesse de Lamballe was considered the most beautiful and accomplished Princess at the Court of Louis XV., adorned with all the grace, virtue, and elegance of manner which so eminently distinguished her through life.*

becoming a victim to seduction, defeating every attack by that prudence which has hitherto been my invincible shield.

“Guilt, unpunished in its first crime, rushes onward, and hurrying from one misdeed to another, like the flood-tide, drives all before it! My silence, and his being defeated without reproach, armed him with courage for fresh daring, and he too well succeeded in embittering the future days of my life, as well as those of his own affectionate wife, and his illustrious father-in-law, the virtuous Duc de Penthievre, who was to all a father.

“To revenge himself upon me for the repulse he met with, this man inveigled my young, inexperienced husband from his bridal bed to those infected with the nauseous poison of every vice! Poor youth! he soon became the prey of every refinement upon dissipation and studied debauchery, till at length his sufferings made his life a burthen, and he died in the most excruciating agonies both of mind and body, in the arms of a disconsolate wife and a distracted father—and thus, in a few short months, at the age of eighteen, was I left a widow to lament my having become a wife!

“I was in this situation, retired from the world and absorbed in grief, with the ever beloved and revered illustrious father of my murdered lord, endeavouring to sooth his pangs for the loss of those comforts in a child with which my cruel disappointment forbade my ever being blest—though, in the endeavour to soothe, I often only aggravated both his and my own misery at our irretrievable loss—when a ray of unexpected light burst upon my dreariness. It was amid this gloom of human agony, these heartrending scenes of real mourning, that the brilliant star shone to disperse the clouds which hovered over our drooping heads,—to dry the hot briny tears which were parching up our miserable vegetating existence—it was in this crisis that Marie Antoinette came, like a messenger sent down from Heaven, graciously to offer the balm of comfort in the sweetest language of human compassion. The pure emotions of her generous soul made her unceasing, unremitting, in her visits to two mortals who must else have perished under the weight of their misfortunes. But for the consolation of her warm friendship we must have sunk into utter despair!

“From that moment I became seriously attached to the Queen of France. She dedicated a great portion of her time to calm the anguish of my poor heart, though I had not yet accepted the honour of becoming a member of Her Majesty’s household. Indeed, I was a considerable time before I could think of undertaking a charge I felt myself so completely incapable of fulfilling. I endeavoured to check the tears that were pouring down my cheeks, to conceal in the Queen’s presence the real feelings of my heart, but the effort only served to increase my anguish when she had departed. Her attachment to me, and the cordiality with which she distinguished herself towards the Duc de Penthievre, gave her a place in that heart, which had been chilled by the fatal vacuum left by its first inhabitant; and Marie Antoinette was the only rival through life that usurped his pretensions, though she could never wean me completely from his memory.

“My health, from the melancholy life I led, had so much declined that my affectionate father, the Duc de Penthievre, with whom I continued to reside, was anxious that I should emerge from my retirement for the benefit of my health. Sensible of his affection, and having always honoured his counsels, I took his advice in this instance. It being in the hard winter, when so many persons were out of bread, the Queen, the Duchesse d’Orleans, the Duc de Penthievre, and myself, introduced the German sledges, in which we were followed by most of the nobility and the rich citizens. This afforded considerable employment to different artificers. The first use I made of my own new vehicle was to visit, in company with the Duc de Penthievre, the necessitous poor families and our pensioners. In the course of our rounds we met the Queen.

"'I suppose,' exclaimed Her Majesty, 'you also are laying a good foundation for my work! Heavens! what must the poor feel! I am wrapped up like a diamond in a box, covered with furs, and yet I am chilled with cold!'

"'That feeling sentiment,' said the Duke, 'will soon warm many a cold family's heart with gratitude to bless Your Majesty!'

"'Why, yes,' replied Her Majesty, showing a long piece of paper containing the names of those to whom she intended to afford relief, 'I have only collected two hundred yet on my list, but the cure will do the rest and help me to draw the strings of my privy purse! But I have not half done my rounds. I daresay before I return to Versailles I shall have as many more, and, since we are engaged in the same business, pray come into my sledge and do not take my work out of my hands! Let me have for once the merit of doing something good!'

"On the coming up of a number of other vehicles belonging to the sledge party, the Queen added, 'Do not say anything about what I have been telling you!' for Her Majesty never wished what she did in the way of charity or donations should be publicly known, the old pensioners excepted, who, being on the list, could not be concealed; especially as she continued to pay all those she found of the late Queen of Louis XV. She was remarkably delicate and timid with respect to hurting the feelings of any one; and, fearing the Duc de Penthievre might not be pleased at her pressing me to leave him in order to join her, she said, 'Well, I will let you off, Princess, on your both promising to dine with me at Trianon; for the King is hunting, not deer, but wood for the poor, and he will see his game off to Paris before he comes back:

"The Duke begged to be excused, but wished me to accept the invitation, which I did, and we parted, each to pursue our different sledge excursions.

"At the hour appointed, I made my appearance at Trianon, and had the honour to dine tete-a-tete with Her Majesty, which was much more congenial to my feelings than if there had been a party, as I was still very low-spirited and unhappy.

"After dinner, 'My dear Princess,' said the Queen to me, 'at your time of life you must not give yourself up entirely to the dead. You wrong the living. We have not been sent into the world for ourselves. I have felt much for your situation, and still do so, and therefore hope, as long as the weather permits, that you will favour me with your company to enlarge our sledge excursions. The King and my dear sister Elizabeth are also much interested about your coming on a visit to Versailles. What think you of our plan.

"I thanked Her Majesty, the King, and the Princess, for their kindness, but I observed that my state of health and mind could so little correspond in any way with the gratitude I should owe them for their royal favours that I trusted a refusal would be attributed to the fact of my consciousness how much rather my society must prove an annoyance and a burthen than a source of pleasure.

"My tears flowing down my cheeks rapidly while I was speaking, the Queen, with that kindness for which she was so eminently distinguished, took me by the hand, and with her handkerchief dried my face.

"'I am,' said the Queen, I about to renew a situation which has for some time past lain dormant; and I hope, my dear Princess, therewith to establish my own private views, in forming the happiness of a worthy individual.'

"I replied that such a plan must insure Her Majesty the desired object she had in view, as no individual could be otherwise than happy under the immediate auspices of so benevolent and generous a Sovereign.

“The Queen, with great affability, as if pleased with my observation, only said, ‘If you really think as you speak, my views are accomplished.’

“My carriage was announced, and I then left Her Majesty, highly pleased at her gracious condescension, which evidently emanated from the kind wish to raise my drooping spirits from their melancholy.

“Gratitude would not permit me to continue long without demonstrating to Her Majesty the sentiments her kindness had awakened in my heart.

“I returned next day with my sister-in-law, the Duchesse d’Orleans, who was much esteemed by the Queen, and we joined the sledge parties with Her Majesty.

“On the third or fourth day of these excursions I again had the honour to dine with Her Majesty, when, in the presence of the Princesse Elizabeth, she asked me if I were still of the same opinion with respect to the person it was her intention to add to her household?

“I myself had totally forgotten the topic and entreated Her Majesty’s pardon for my want of memory, and begged she would signify to what subject she alluded.

“The Princesse Elizabeth laughed. ‘I thought,’ cried she, ‘that you had known it long ago! The Queen, with His Majesty’s consent, has nominated you, my dear Princess (embracing me), superintendent of her household.’

“The Queen, also embracing me, said, ‘Yes; it is very true. You said the individual destined to such a situation could not be otherwise than happy; and I am myself thoroughly happy in being able thus to contribute towards rendering you so.’

“I was perfectly at a loss for a moment or two, but, recovering myself from the effect of this unexpected and unlooked for preferment, I thanked Her Majesty with the best grace I was able for such an unmerited mark of distinction.

“The Queen, perceiving my embarrassment, observed, ‘I knew I should surprise you; but I thought your being established at Versailles much more desirable for one of your rank and youth than to be, as you were, with the Duc de Penthievre; who, much as I esteem his amiable character and numerous great virtues, is by no means the most cheering companion for my charming Princess. From this moment let our friendships be united in the common interest of each other’s happiness.’

“The Queen took me by the hand. The Princesse Elizabeth, joining hers, exclaimed to the Queen, ‘Oh, my dear sister! let me make the trio in this happy union of friends!’

“In the society of her adored Majesty and of her saint-like sister Elizabeth I have found my only balm of consolation! Their graciously condescending to sympathise in the grief with which I was overwhelmed from the cruel disappointment of my first love, filled up in some degree the vacuum left by his loss, who was so prematurely ravished from me in the flower of youth, leaving me a widow at eighteen; and though that loss is one I never can replace or forget, the poignancy of its effect has been in a great degree softened by the kindnesses of my excellent father-in-law, the Duc de Penthievre, and the relations resulting from my situation with, and the never-ceasing attachment of my beloved royal mistress.”

Section 7

[The connexion of the Princesse de Lamballe with the Queen, of which she has herself described the origin in the preceding chapter, proved so important in its influence upon the reputation and fate of both these illustrious victims, that I must once more withdraw the attention of the reader, to explain, from personal observation and confidential disclosures, the leading causes of the violent dislike which was kindled in the public against an intimacy that it would have been most fortunate had Her Majesty preferred through life to every other.

The selection of a friend by the Queen, and the sudden elevation of that friend to the highest station in the royal household, could not fail to alarm the selfishness of courtiers, who always feel themselves injured by the favour shown to others. An obsolete office was revived in favour of the Princesse de Lamballe. In the time of Maria Leckzinska, wife of Louis XV., the office of superintendent, then held by Mademoiselle de Clermont, was suppressed when its holder died. The office gave a control over the inclinations of Queens, by which Maria Leckzinska was sometimes inconvenienced; and it had lain dormant ever since. Its restoration by a Queen who it was believed could be guided by no motive but the desire to seek pretexts for showing undue favour, was of course eyed askance, and ere long openly calumniated.

The Comtesse de Noailles, who never could forget the title the Queen gave her of Madame Etiquette, nor forgive the frequent jokes which Her Majesty passed upon her antiquated formality, availed herself of the opportunity offered by her husband's being raised to the dignity of Marshal of France, to resign her situation on the appointment of the Princesse de Lamballe as superintendent. The Countess retired with feelings embittered against her royal mistress, and her annoyance in the sequel ripened into enmity. The Countess was attached to a very powerful party, not only at Court but scattered throughout the kingdom. Her discontent arose from the circumstance of no longer having to take her orders from the Queen direct, but from her superintendent. Ridiculous as this may seem to an impartial observer, it created one of the most powerful hostilities against which Her Majesty had afterwards to contend.

Though the Queen esteemed the Comtesse de Noailles for her many good qualities, yet she was so much put out of her way by the rigour with which the Countess enforced forms which to Her Majesty appeared puerile and absurd, that she felt relieved, and secretly gratified, by her retirement. It will be shown hereafter to what an excess the Countess was eventually carried by her malice.

One of the popular objections to the revival of the office of superintendent in favour of the Princesse de Lamballe arose from its reputed extravagance. This was as groundless as the other charges against the Queen. The etiquettes of dress, and the requisite increase of every other expense, from the augmentation of every article of the necessaries as well as the luxuries of life, made a treble difference between the expenditure of the circumscribed Court of Maria Leckzinska and that of Louis XVI.; yet the Princesse de Lamballe received no more salary than had been allotted to Mademoiselle de Clermont in the selfsame situation half a century before.

(And even that salary she never appropriated to any private use of her own, being amply supplied through the generous bounty of her father-in-law, the Duc de Penthievre; and

latterly, to my knowledge, so far from receiving any pay, she often paid the Queen's and Princesse Elizabeth's bills out of her own purse.)

So far from possessing the slightest propensity either to extravagance in herself or to the encouragement of extravagance in others, the Princesse de Lamballe was a model of prudence, and upon those subjects, as indeed upon all others, the Queen could not have had a more discreet counsellor. She eminently contributed to the charities of the Queen, who was the mother of the fatherless, the support of the widow, and the general protectress and refuge of suffering humanity. Previously to the purchase of any article of luxury, the Princess would call for the list of the pensioners: if anything was due on that account, it was instantly paid, and the luxury dispensed with.

She never made her appearance in the Queen's apartments except at established hours. This was scrupulously observed till the Revolution. Circumstances then obliged her to break through forms. The Queen would only receive communications, either written or verbal, upon the subjects growing out of that wretched crisis, in the presence of the Princess; and hence her apartments were open to all who had occasion to see Her Majesty. This made their intercourse more constant and unceremonious. But before this, the Princess only went to the royal presence at fixed hours, unless she had memorials to present to the King, Queen, or Ministers, in favour of such as asked for justice or mercy. Hence, whenever the Princess entered before the stated times, the Queen would run and embrace her, and exclaim: "Well, my dear Princesse de Lamballe! what widow, what orphan, what suffering or oppressed petitioner am I to thank for this visit? for I know you never come to me empty-handed when you come unexpectedly!" The Princess, on these occasions, often had the petitioners waiting in an adjoining apartment, that they might instantly avail themselves of any inclination the Queen might show to see them.

Once the Princess was deceived by a female painter of doubtful character, who supplicated her to present a work she had executed to the Queen. I myself afterwards returned that work to its owner. Thenceforward, the Princess became very rigid in her inquiries, previous to taking the least interest in any application, or consenting to present any one personally to the King or Queen. She required thoroughly to be informed of the nature of the request, and of the merit and character of the applicant, before she would attend to either. Owing to this caution Her Highness scarcely ever after met with a negative. In cases of great importance, though the Queen's compassionate and good heart needed no stimulus to impel her to forward the means of justice, the Princess would call the influence of the Princesse Elizabeth to her aid; and Elizabeth never sued in vain.

Marie Antoinette paid the greatest attention to all memorials. They were regularly collected every week by Her Majesty's private secretary, the Abbe Vermond. I have myself seen many of them, when returned from the Princesse de Lamballe, with the Queen's marginal notes in her own handwriting, and the answers dictated by Her Majesty to the different, officers of the departments relative to the nature of the respective demands. She always recommended the greatest attention to all public documents, and annexed notes to such as passed through her hands to prevent their being thrown aside or lost.

One of those who were least satisfied with the appointment of the Princesse de Lamballe to the office of superintendent was her brother-in-law, the Duc d'Orleans, who, having attempted her virtue on various occasions and been repulsed, became mortified and alarmed at her situation as a check to his future enterprise.

At one time the Duc and Duchesse d'Orleans were most constant and assiduous in their attendance on Marie Antoinette. They were at all her parties. The Queen was very fond of the

Duchess. It is supposed that the interest Her Majesty took in that lady, and the steps to which some time afterwards that interest led, planted the first seeds of the unrelenting and misguided hostility which, in the deadliest times of the Revolution, animated the Orleanists against the throne.

The Duc d'Orleans, then Duc de Chartres, was never a favourite of the Queen. He was only tolerated at Court on account of his wife and of the great intimacy which subsisted between him and the Comte d'Artois. Louis XVI. had often expressed his disapprobation of the Duke's character, which his conduct daily justified.

The Princesse de Lamballe could have no cause to think of her brother-in-law but with horror. He had insulted her, and, in revenge at his defeat, had, it was said, deprived her, by the most awful means, of her husband. The Princess was tenderly attached to her sister-in-law, the Duchess. Her attachment could not but make her look very unfavourably upon the circumstance of the Duke's subjecting his wife to the humiliation of residing in the palace with Madame de Genlis, and being forced to receive a person of morals so incorrect as the guardian of her children. The Duchess had complained to her father, the Duc de Penthievre, in the presence of the Princesse de Lamballe, of the very great ascendency Madame de Genlis exercised over her husband; and had even requested the Queen to use her influence in detaching the Duke from this connexion.

(It was generally understood that the Duke had a daughter by Madame de Genlis. This daughter, when grown up, was married to the late Irish Lord Robert Fitzgerald.)

But she had too much gentleness of nature not presently to forget her resentment. Being much devoted to her husband, rather than irritate him to further neglect by personal remonstrance, she determined to make the best of a bad business, and tolerated Madame de Genlis, although she made no secret among her friends and relations of the reason why she did so. Nay, so far did her wish not to disoblige her husband prevail over her own feelings as to induce her to yield at last to his importunities by frequently proposing to present Madame de Genlis to the Queen. But Madame de Genilis never could obtain either a public or a private audience. Though the Queen was a great admirer of merit and was fond of encouraging talents, of which Madame de Genlis was by no means deficient, yet even the account the Duchess herself had given, had Her Majesty possessed no other means of knowledge, would have sealed that lady's exclusion from the opportunities of display at Court which she sought so earnestly.

There was another source of exasperation against the Duc d'Orleans; and the great cause of a new and, though less obtrusive, yet perhaps an equally dangerous foe under all the circumstances, in Madame de Genlis. The anonymous slander of the one was circulated through all France by the other; and spleen and disappointment feathered the venomed arrows shot at the heart of power by malice and ambition. Be the charge true or false, these anonymous libels were generally considered as the offspring of this lady: they were industriously scattered by the Duc d'Orleans; and their frequent refutation by the Queen's friends only increased the malignant industry of their inventor.

An event which proved the most serious of all that ever happened to the Queen, and the consequences of which were distinctly foreseen by the Princesse de Lamballe and others of her true friends, was now growing to maturity.

The deposed Court oracle, the Comtesse de Noailles, had been succeeded as literary leader by the Comtesse Diane de Polignac. She was a favourite of the Comte d'Artois, and was the first lady in attendance upon the Countess, his wife.

(The Comtesse Diane de Polignac had a much better education, and considerably more natural capacity, than her sister-in-law, the Duchess, and the Queen merely disliked her for her prudish affectation. The Comtesse d'Artois grew jealous of the Count's intimacy with the Comtesse Diane. While she considered herself as the only one of the Royal Family likely to be mother of a future sovereign, she was silent, or perhaps too much engrossed by her castles in the air to think of anything but diadems; but when she saw the Queen producing heirs, she grew out of humour at her lost popularity, and began to turn her attention to her husband's Endymionship to this now Diana! When she had made up her mind to get her rival out of her house, she consulted one of the family; but being told that the best means for a wife to keep her husband out of harm's way was to provide him with a domestic occupation for his leisure hours at home, than which nothing could be better than a handmaid under the same roof, she made a merit of necessity and submitted ever after to retain the Comtesse Diane, as she had been prudently advised. The Comtesse Diane, in consequence, remained in the family even up to the 17th October, 1789, when she left Versailles in company with the De Polignacs and the D'Artois, who all emigrated together from France to Italy and lived at Stria on the Brenta, near Venice, for some time, till the Comtesse d'Artois went to Turin.)

The Queen's conduct had always been very cool to her. She deemed her a self-sufficient coquette. However, the Comtesse Diane was a constant attendant at the gay parties which were then the fashion of the Court, though not greatly admired.

The reader will scarcely need to be informed that the event to which I have just alluded is the introduction by the Comtesse Diane of her sister-in-law, the Comtesse Julie de Polignac, to the Queen; and having brought the record up to this point I here once more dismiss my own pen for that of the Princesse de Lamballe.

It will be obvious to every one that I must have been indebted to the conversations of my beloved patroness for most of the sentiments and nearly all the facts I have just been stating; and had the period on which she has written so little as to drive me to the necessity of writing for her been less pregnant with circumstances almost entirely personal to herself, no doubt I should have found more upon that period in her manuscript. But the year of which Her Highness says so little was the year of happiness and exclusive favour; and the Princess was above the vanity of boasting, even privately in the self-confessional of her diary. She resumes her records with her apprehensions; and thus proceeds, describing the introduction of the Comtesse Julie de Polignac, regretting her ascendency over the Queen, and foreseeing its fatal effects.]

"I had been only a twelvemonth in Her Majesty's service, which I believe was the happiest period of both our lives, when, at one of the Court assemblies, the Comtesse Julie de Polignac was first introduced by her sister-in-law, the Comtesse Diane de Polignac, to the Queen.

"She had lived in the country, quite a retired life, and appeared to be more the motherly woman, and the domestic wife, than the ambitious Court lady, or royal sycophant. She was easy of access, and elegantly plain in her dress and deportment.

"Her appearance at Court was as fatal to the Queen as it was propitious to herself!

"She seemed formed by nature to become a royal favourite, unassuming, remarkably complaisant, possessing a refined taste, with a good-natured disposition, not handsome, but well formed, and untainted by haughtiness or pomposity.

"It would appear, from the effect her introduction had on the Queen, that her domestic virtues were written in her countenance; for she became a royal favourite before she had time to become a candidate for royal favour.

“The Queen’s sudden attachment to the Comtesse Julie produced no alteration in my conduct, while I saw nothing extraordinary to alarm me for the consequences of any particular marked partiality, by which the character and popularity of Her Majesty might be endangered.

“But, seeing the progress this lady made in the feelings of the Queen’s enemies, it became my duty, from the situation I held, to caution Her Majesty against the risks she ran in making her favourites friends; for it was very soon apparent how highly the Court disapproved of this intimacy and partiality: and the same feeling soon found its way to the many-headed monster, the people, who only saw the favourite without considering the charge she held. Scarcely had she felt the warm rays of royal favour, when the chilling blasts of envy and malice began to nip it in the bud of all its promised bliss. Even long before she touched the pinnacle of her grandeur as governess of the royal children the blackest calumny began to show itself in prints, caricatures, songs, and pamphlets of every description.

“A reciprocity of friendship between a Queen and a subject, by those who never felt the existence of such a feeling as friendship, could only be considered in a criminal point of view. But by what perversion could suspicion frown upon the ties between two married women, both living in the greatest harmony with their respective husbands, especially when both became mothers and were so devoted to their offspring? This boundless friendship did glow between this calumniated pair calumniated because the sacredness and peculiarity of the sentiment which united them was too pure to be understood by the grovelling minds who made themselves their sentencers. The friend is the friend’s shadow. The real sentiment of friendship, of which disinterested sympathy is the sign, cannot exist unless between two of the same sex, because a physical difference involuntarily modifies the complexion of the intimacy where the sexes are opposite, even though there be no physical relations. The Queen of France had love in her eyes and Heaven in her soul. The Duchesse de Polignac, whose person beamed with every charm, could never have been condemned, like the Friars of La Trappe, to the mere memento mori.

“When I had made the representations to Her Majesty which duty exacted from me on perceiving her ungovernable partiality for her new favourite, that I might not importune her by the awkwardness naturally arising from my constant exposure to the necessity of witnessing an intimacy she knew I did not sanction, I obtained permission from my royal mistress to visit my father-in-law, the Duc de Penthievre, at Rambouillet, his country-seat.

“Soon after I arrived there, I was taken suddenly ill after dinner with the most excruciating pains in my stomach. I thought myself dying. Indeed, I should have been so but for the fortunate and timely discovery that I was poisoned certainly, not intentionally, by any one belonging to my dear father’s household; but by some execrable hand which had an interest in my death.

“The affair was hushed up with a vague report that some of the made dishes had been prepared in a stew-pan long out of use, which the clerk of the Duke’s kitchen had forgotten to get properly tinned.

“This was a doubtful story for many reasons. Indeed, I firmly believe that the poison given me had been prepared in the salt, for every one at table had eaten of the same dish without suffering the smallest inconvenience.

“The news of this accident had scarcely arrived at Versailles, when the Queen, astounded, and, in excessive anxiety, instantly sent off her physician, and her private secretary, the Abbe Vermond, to bring me back to my apartments at Versailles, with strict orders not to leave me a moment at the Duke’s, for fear of a second attempt of the same nature. Her Majesty had imputed the first to the earnestness I had always shown in support of her interests, and she

seemed now more ardent in her kindness towards me from the idea of my being exposed through her means to the treachery of assassins in the dark. The Queen awaited our coming impatiently, and, not seeing the carriages return so quickly as she fancied they ought to arrive, she herself set off for Rambouillet, and did not leave me till she had prevailed on me to quit my father-in-law's, and we both returned together the same night to Versailles, where the Queen in person dedicated all her attention to the restoration of my health.

"As yet, however, nothing in particular had discovered that splendour for which the De Polignacs were afterwards so conspicuous.

"Indeed, so little were their circumstances calculated for a Court life, that when the friends of Madame de Polignac perceived the growing attachment of the young Queen to the palladium of their hopes, in order to impel Her Majesty's friendship to repair the deficiencies of fortune, they advised the magnet to quit the Court abruptly, assigning the want of means as the motive of her retreat. The story got wind, and proved propitious.

"The Queen, to secure the society of her friend, soon supplied the resources she required and took away the necessity for her retirement. But the die was cast. In gaining one friend she sacrificed a host. By this act of imprudent preference she lost forever the affections of the old nobility. This was the gale which drove her back among the breakers.

"I saw the coming storm, and endeavoured to make my Sovereign feel its danger. Presuming that my example would be followed, I withdrew from the De Polignac society, and vainly flattered myself that prudence would impel others not to encourage Her Majesty's amiable infatuation till the consequences should be irretrievable. But Sovereigns are always surrounded by those who make it a point to reconcile them to their follies, however flagrant, and keep them on good terms with themselves, however severely they may be censured by the world.

"If I had read the book of fate I could not have seen more distinctly the fatal results which actually took place from this unfortunate connexion. The Duchess and myself always lived in the greatest harmony, and equally shared the confidence of the Queen; but it was my duty not to sanction Her Majesty's marked favouritism by my presence. The Queen often expressed her discontent to me upon the subject. She used to tell me how much it grieved her to be denied success in her darling desire of uniting her friends with each other, as they were already united in her own heart. Finding my resolution unalterable, she was mortified, but gave up her pursuit. When she became assured that all importunity was useless, she ever after avoided wounding my feelings by remonstrance, and allowed me to pursue the system I had adopted, rather than deprive herself of my society, which would have been the consequence had I not been left at liberty to follow the dictates of my own sense of propriety in a course from which I was resolved that even Her Majesty's displeasure should not make me swerve.

"Once in particular, at an entertainment given to the Emperor Joseph at Trianon, I remember the Queen took the opportunity to repeat how much she felt herself mortified at the course in which I persisted of never making my appearance at the Duchesse de Polignac's parties.

"I replied, 'I believe, Madame, we are both of us disappointed; but Your Majesty has your remedy, by replacing me by a lady less scrupulous.'

"'I was too sanguine,' said the Queen, 'in having flattered myself that I had chosen two friends who would form, from their sympathising and uniting their sentiments with each other, a society which would embellish my private life as much as they adorn their public stations.'

“I said it was by my unalterable friendship and my loyal and dutiful attachment to the sacred person of Her Majesty that I had been prompted to a line of conduct in which the motives whence it arose would impel me to persist while I had the honour to hold a situation under Her Majesty’s roof.

“The Queen, embracing me, exclaimed, ‘That will be for life, for death alone can separate us!’

“This is the last conversation I recollect to have had with the Queen upon this distressing subject.

“The Abbe Vermond, who had been Her Majesty’s tutor, but who was now her private secretary, began to dread that his influence over her, from having been her confidential adviser from her youth upwards, would suffer from the rising authority of the all-predominant new favourite. Consequently, he thought proper to remonstrate, not with Her Majesty, but with those about her royal person. The Queen took no notice of these side-wind complaints, not wishing to enter into any explanation of her conduct. On this the Abbe withdrew from Court. But he only retired for a short time, and that to make better terms for the future. Here was a new spring for those who were supplying the army of calumniators with poison. Happy had it been, perhaps, for France and the Queen if Vermond had never returned. But the Abbe was something like a distant country cousin of an English Minister, a man of no talents, but who hoped for employment through the power of his kinsman. ‘There is nothing on hand now,’ answered the Minister, ‘but a Bishop’s mitre or a Field-marshal’s staff.’—‘Oh, very well,’ replied the countryman; ‘either will do for me till something better turns up.’ The Abbe, in his retirement finding leisure to reflect that there was no probability of anything ‘better turning up’ than his post of private secretary, tutor, confidant, and counsellor (and that not always the most correct) of a young and amiable Queen of France, soon made his reappearance and kept his jealousy of the De Polignacs ever after to himself.

“The Abbe Vermond enjoyed much influence with regard to ecclesiastical preferments. He was too fond of his situation ever to contradict or thwart Her Majesty in any of her plans; too much of a courtier to assail her ears with the language of truth; and by far too much a clergyman to interest himself but for Mother Church.

“In short, he was more culpable in not doing his duty than in the mischief he occasioned, for he certainly oftener misled the Queen by his silence than by his advice.”

Section 8

“I have already mentioned that Marie Antoinette had no decided taste for literature. Her mind rather sought its amusements in the ball-room, the promenade, the theatre, especially when she herself was a performer, and the concert-room, than in her library and among her books. Her coldness towards literary men may in, some degree be accounted for by the disgust which she took at the calumnies and caricatures resulting from her mother’s partiality for her own revered teacher, the great Metastasio. The resemblance of most of Maria Theresa’s children to that poet was coupled with the great patronage he received from the Empress; and much less than these circumstances would have been quite enough to furnish a tale for the slanderer, injurious to the reputation of any exalted personage.

“The taste of Marie Antoinette for private theatricals was kept up till the clouds of the Revolution darkened over all her enjoyments.

“These innocent amusements were made subjects of censure against her by the many courtiers who were denied access to them; while some, who were permitted to be present, were too well pleased with the opportunity of sneering at her mediocrity in the art, which those, who could not see her, were ready to criticise with the utmost severity. It is believed that Madame de Genlis found this too favourable an opportunity to be slighted. Anonymous satires upon the Queen’s performances, which were attributed to the malice of that authoress, were frequently shown to Her Majesty by good-natured friends. The Duc de Fronsac also, from some situation he held at Court, though not included in the private household of Her Majesty at Trianon, conceiving himself highly injured by not being suffered to interfere, was much exasperated, and took no pains to prevent others from receiving the infection of his resentment.

“Of all the arts, music was the only one which Her Majesty ever warmly patronised. For music she was an enthusiast. Had her talents in this art been cultivated, it is certain from her judgment in it that she would have made very considerable progress. She sang little French airs with great taste and feeling. She improved much under the tuition of the great composer, her master, the celebrated Sacchini. After his death, Sapio was named his successor; but, between the death of one master and the appointment of another, the revolutionary horrors so increased that her mind was no longer in a state to listen to anything but the howlings of the tempest.

“In her happier days of power, the great Gluck was brought at her request from Germany to Paris. He cost nothing to the public Treasury, for Her Majesty paid all his expenses out of her own purse, leaving him the profits of his operas, which attracted immense sums to the theatre.

“Marie Antoinette paid for the musical education of the French singer, Garat, and pensioned him for her private concerts.

“Her Majesty was the great patroness of the celebrated Viotti, who was also attached to her private musical parties. Before Viotti began to perform his concertos, Her Majesty, with the most amiable condescension, would go round the music saloon, and say, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, I request you will be silent, and very attentive, and not enter into conversation, while Mr. Viotti is playing, for it interrupts him in the execution of his fine performance.

“Gluck composed his Armida in compliment to the personal charms of Marie Antoinette. I never saw Her Majesty more interested about anything than she was for its success. She

became a perfect slave to it. She had the gracious condescension to hear all the pieces through, at Gluck's request, before they were submitted to the stage for rehearsal. Gluck said he always improved his music after he saw the effect it had upon Her Majesty.

"He was coming out of the Queen's apartment one day, after he had been performing one of these pieces for Her Majesty's approbation, when I followed and congratulated him on the increased success he had met with from the whole band of the opera at every rehearsal. 'O my dear Princess!' cried he, 'it wants nothing to make it be applauded up to the seven skies but two such delightful heads as Her Majesty's and your own.'—'Oh, if that be all,' answered I, 'we'll have them painted for you, Mr. Gluck!'—'No, no, no! you do not understand me,' replied Gluck, 'I mean real, real heads. My actresses are very ugly, and Armida and her confidential lady ought to be very handsome:

"However great the success of the opera of Armida, and certainly it was one of the best productions ever exhibited on the French stage, no one had a better opinion of its composition than Gluck himself. He was quite mad about it. He told the Queen that the air of France had invigorated his musical genius, and that, after having had the honour of seeing Her Majesty, his ideas were so much inspired that his compositions resembled her, and became alike angelic and sublime!

"The first artist who undertook the part of Armida was Madame Saint Huberti. The Queen was very partial to her. She was principal female singer at the French opera, was a German by birth, and strongly recommended by Gluck for her good natural voice. At Her Majesty's request, Gluck himself taught Madame Saint Huberti the part of Armida. Sacchini, also, at the command of Marie Antoinette, instructed her in the style and sublimity of the Italian school, and Mdlle. Benin, the Queen's dressmaker and milliner, was ordered to furnish the complete dress for the character.

"The Queen, perhaps, was more liberal to this lady than to any other actress upon the stage. She had frequently paid her debts, which were very considerable, for she dressed like a Queen whenever she represented one.

"Gluck's consciousness of the merit of his own works, and of their dignity, excited no small jealousy, during the getting up of Armida, in his rival with the public, the great Vestris, to whom he scarcely left space to exhibit the graces of his art; and many severe disputes took place between the two rival sharers of the Parisian enthusiasm. Indeed, it was at one time feared that the success of Armida would be endangered, unless an equal share of the performance were conceded to the dancers. But Gluck, whose German obstinacy would not give up a note, told Vestris he might compose a ballet in which he would leave him his own way entirely; but that an artist whose profession only taught him to reason with his heels should not kick about works like Armida at his pleasure. 'My subject,' added Gluck, 'is taken from the immortal Tasso. My music has been logically composed, and with the ideas of my head; and, of course, there is very little room left for capering. If Tasso had thought proper to make Rinaldo a dancer he never would have designated him a warrior.'

"Rinaldo was the part Vestris wished to be allotted to his son. However, through the interference of the Queen, Vestris prudently took the part as it had been originally finished by Gluck.

"The Queen was a great admirer and patroness of Augustus Vestris, the god of dance, as he was styled. Augustus Vestris never lost Her Majesty's favour, though he very often lost his sense of the respect he owed to the public, and showed airs and refused to dance. Once he did so when Her Majesty was at the opera. Upon some frivolous pretext he refused to appear. He was, in consequence, immediately arrested. His father, alarmed at his son's temerity, flew to

me, and with the most earnest supplications implored I would condescend to endeavour to obtain the pardon of Her Majesty. ‘My son,’ cried he, ‘did not know that Her Majesty had honoured the theatre with her presence. Had he been aware of it, could he have refused to dance for his most bounteous benefactress? I, too, am grieved beyond the power of language to describe, by this mal apropos contretemps between the two houses of Vestris and Bourbon, as we have always lived in the greatest harmony ever since we came from Florence to Paris. My son is very sorry and will dance most bewitchingly if Her Majesty will graciously condescend to order his release!’

“I repeated the conversation verbatim, to Her Majesty, who enjoyed the arrogance of the Florentine, and sent her page to order young Vestris to be set immediately at liberty.

“Having exerted all the wonderful powers of his art, the Queen applauded him very much. When Her Majesty was about leaving her box, old Vestris appeared at the entrance, leading his son to thank the Queen.

“‘Ah, Monsieur Vestris,’ said the Queen to the father, you never danced as your son has done this evening.’

“‘That’s very natural, Madame,’ answered old Vestris, ‘I never had a Vestris, please Your Majesty, for a master.’

“‘Then you have the greater merit,’ replied the Queen, turning round to old Vestris—‘Ah, I shall never forget you and Mademoiselle Guimard dancing the minuet de la cour.’

“On this old Vestris held up his head with that peculiar grace for which he was so much distinguished. The old man, though ridiculously vain, was very much of a gentleman in his manners. The father of Vestris was a painter of some celebrity at Florence, and originally from Tuscany.”

Section 9

“The visit of the favourite brother of Marie Antoinette, the Emperor Joseph the Second, to France, had been long and anxiously expected, and was welcomed by her with delight. The pleasure Her Majesty discovered at having him with her is scarcely credible; and the affectionate tenderness with which the Emperor frequently expressed himself on seeing his favourite sister evinced that their joys were mutual.

“Like everything else, however, which gratified and obliged the Queen, her evil star converted even this into a misfortune. It was said that the French Treasury, which was not overflowing, was still more reduced by the Queen’s partiality for her brother. She was accused of having given him immense sums of money; which was utterly false.

“The finances of Joseph were at that time in a situation too superior to those of France to admit of such extravagance, or even to render it desirable. The circumstance which gave a colour to the charge was this:

“The Emperor, in order to facilitate the trade of his Brabant subjects, had it in contemplation to open the navigation of the Scheldt. This measure would have been ruinous to many of the skippers, as well as to the internal commerce of France. It was considered equally dangerous to the trade and navigation of the North Hollanders. To prevent it, negotiations were carried on by the French Minister, though professedly for the mutual interest of both countries, yet entirely at the instigation and on account of the Dutch. The weighty argument of the Dutch to prevent the Emperor from accomplishing a purpose they so much dreaded was a sum of many millions, which passed by means of some monied speculation in the Exchange through France to its destination at Vienna. It was to see this affair settled that the Emperor declared in Vienna his intention of taking France in his way from Italy, before he should go back to Austria.

“The certainty of a transmission of money from France to Austria was quite enough to awaken the malevolent, who would have taken care, even had they inquired into the source whence the money came, never to have made it public. The opportunity was too favourable not to be made the pretext to raise a clamour against the Queen for robbing France to favour and enrich Austria.

“The Emperor, who had never seen me, though he had often heard me spoken of at the Court of Turin, expressed a wish, soon after his arrival, that I should be presented to him. The immediate cause of this let me explain.

“I was very much attached to the Princesse Clotilde, whom I had caused to be united to Prince Charles Emanuel of Piedmont. Our family had, indeed, been principally instrumental in the alliances of the two brothers of the King of France with the two Piedmontese Princesses, as I had been in the marriage of the Piedmontese Prince with the Princess of France. When the Emperor Joseph visited the Court of Turin he was requested when he saw me in Paris to signify the King of Sardinia’s satisfaction at my good offices. Consequently, the Emperor lost no time in delivering his message.

“When I was just entering the Queen’s apartment to be presented, ‘Here,’ said Her Majesty, leading me to the Emperor, ‘is the Princess,’ and, then turning to me, exclaimed, ‘Mercy, how cold you are!’ The Emperor answered Her Majesty in German, ‘What heat can you

expect from the hand of one whose heart resides with the dead?' and subjoined, in the same language, 'What a pity that so charming a head should be fixed on a dead body.'

"I affected to understand the Emperor literally, and set him and the Queen laughing by thanking His Imperial Majesty for the compliment.

"The Emperor was exceedingly affable and full of anecdote. Marie Antoinette resembled him in her general manners. The similitude in their easy openness of address towards persons of merit was very striking. Both always endeavoured to encourage persons of every class to speak their minds freely, with this difference, that Her Majesty in so doing never forgot her dignity or her rank at Court. Sometimes, however, I have seen her, though so perfect in her deportment with inferiors, much intimidated and sometimes embarrassed in the presence of the Princes and Princesses, her equals, who for the first time visited Versailles: indeed, so much as to give them a very incorrect idea of her capacity. It was by no means an easy matter to cause Her Majesty to unfold her real sentiments or character on a first acquaintance.

"I remember the Emperor one evening at supper when he was exceedingly good-humoured, talkative, and amusing. He had visited all his Italian relations, and had a word for each, man, woman, or child—not a soul was spared. The King scarcely once opened his mouth, except to laugh at some of the Emperor's jokes upon his Italian relations.

"He began by asking the Queen if she punished her husband by making him keep as many Lents in the same year as her sister did the King of Naples. The Queen not knowing what the Emperor meant, he explained himself, and said, 'When the King of Naples offends his Queen she keeps him on short commons and 'soupe maigre' till he has expiated the offence by the penance of humbling himself; and then, and not till then, permits him to return and share the nuptial rights of her bed.'

"'This sister of mine,' said the Emperor, 'is a proficient Queen in the art of man training. My other sister, the Duchess of Parma, is equally scientific in breaking-in horses; for she is constantly in the stables with her grooms, by which she 'grooms' a pretty sum yearly in buying, selling, and breaking-in; while the simpleton, her husband, is ringing the bells with the Friars of Colorno to call his good subjects to Mass.

"'My brother Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, feeds his subjects with plans of economy, a dish that costs nothing, and not only saves him a multitude of troubles in public buildings and public institutions, but keeps the public money in his private coffers; which is one of the greatest and most classical discoveries a Sovereign can possibly accomplish, and I give Leopold much credit for his ingenuity.

"'My dear brother Ferdinand, Archduke of Milan, considering he is only Governor of Lombardy, is not without industry; and I am told, when out of the glimpse of his dragon the holy Beatrice, his Archduchess, sells his corn in the time of war to my enemies, as he does to my friends in the time of peace. So he loses nothing by his speculations!'

"The Queen checked the Emperor repeatedly, though she could not help smiling at his caricatures.

"'As to you, my dear Marie Antoinette,' continued the Emperor, not heeding her, 'I see you have made great progress in the art of painting. You have lavished more colour on one cheek than Rubens would have required for all the figures in his cartoons.' Observing one of the Ladies of Honour still more highly rouged than the Queen, he said, 'I suppose I look like a death's head upon a tombstone, among all these high-coloured furies.'

"The Queen again tried to interrupt the Emperor, but he was not to be put out of countenance.

“He said he had no doubt, when he arrived at Brussels, that he should hear of the progress of his sister, the Archduchess Maria Christina, in her money negotiations with the banker Valkeers, who made a good stock for her husband’s jobs.

“‘If Maria Christina’s gardens and palace at Lakin could speak,’ observed he, ‘what a spectacle of events would they not produce! What a number of fine sights my own family would afford!

“‘When I get to Cologne,’ pursued the Emperor, there I shall see my great fat brother Maximilian, in his little electorate, spending his yearly revenue upon an ecclesiastical procession; for priests, like opposition, never bark but to get into the manger; never walk empty-handed; rosaries and good cheer always wind up their holy work; and my good Maximilian, as head of his Church, has scarcely feet to waddle into it. Feasting and fasting produce the same effect. In wind and food he is quite an adept—puffing, from one cause or the other, like a smith’s bellows!’

“Indeed, the Elector of Cologne was really grown so very fat, that, like his Imperial mother, he could scarcely walk. He would so over-eat himself at these ecclesiastical dinners, to make his guests welcome, that, from indigestion, he would be puffing and blowing, an hour afterwards, for breath.

“‘As I have begun the family visits,’ continued the Emperor, ‘I must not pass by the Archduchess Mariana and the Lady Abbess at Clagenfurt; or, the Lord knows, I shall never hear the end of their klagens.—[A German word which signifies complaining.]—The first, I am told, is grown so ugly, and, of course, so neglected by mankind, that she is become an utter stranger to any attachment, excepting the fleshy embraces of the disgusting wen that encircles her neck and bosom, and makes her head appear like a black spot upon a large sheet of white paper. Therefore klagen is all I can expect from that quarter of female flesh, and I dare say it will be levelled against the whole race of mankind for their want of taste in not admiring her exuberance of human craw!

“‘As to the Lady Abbess, she is one of my best recruiting sergeants. She is so fond of training cadets for the benefit of the army that they learn more from her system in one month than at the military academy at Neustadt in a whole year. She is her mother’s own daughter. She understands military tactics thoroughly. She and I never quarrel, except when I garrison her citadel with invalids. She and the canoness, Mariana, would rather see a few young ensigns than all the staffs of the oldest Field-marshals!’

“The Queen often made signs to the Emperor to desist from thus exposing every member of his family, and seemed to feel mortified; but the more Her Majesty endeavoured to check his freedom, and make him silent, the more he enlarged upon the subject. He did not even omit Maria Theresa, who, he said, in consequence of some papers found on persons arrested as spies from the Prussian camp, during the seven years’ war, was reported to have been greatly surprised to have discovered that her husband, the Emperor Francis I., supplied the enemy’s army with all kinds of provision from her stores.

“The King scarcely ever answered excepting when the Emperor told the Queen that her staircase and antechamber at Versailles resembled more the Turkish bazars of Constantinople than a royal palace. ‘But,’ added he, laughing, ‘I suppose you would not allow the nuisance of hawkers and pedlars almost under your nose, if the sweet perfumes of a handsome present did not compensate for the disagreeable effluvia exhaling from their filthy traffic.’[15]

[15] *It was an old custom, in the passages and staircase of all the royal palaces, for tradespeople to sell their merchandise for the accommodation of the Court.*

“On this, Louis XVI., in a tone of voice somewhat varying from his usual mildness, assured the Emperor that neither himself nor the Queen derived any advantage from the custom, beyond the convenience of purchasing articles inside the palace at any moment they were wanted, without being forced to send for them elsewhere.

“‘That is the very reason, my dear brother,’ replied Joseph, ‘why I would not allow these shops to be where they are. The temptation to lavish money to little purpose is too strong; and women have not philosophy enough to resist having things they like, when they can be obtained easily, though they may not be wanted.’

“‘Custom,’ answered the King—

“‘True,’ exclaimed the Queen, interrupting him; custom, my dear brother, obliges us to tolerate in France many things which you, in Austria, have. long since abolished; but the French are not to be: treated like the Germans. A Frenchman is a slave to habit. His very caprice in the change of fashion proceeds more from habit than genius or invention. His very restlessness of character is systematic; and old customs and national habits in a nation virtually spirituelle must not be trifled with. The tree torn up by the roots dies for want of nourishment; but, on the contrary, when lopped carefully only of its branches the pruning makes it more valuable to the cultivator and more pleasing to the beholder. So it is with national prejudices, which are often but the excrescences of national virtues. Root them out and you root out virtue and all. They must only be: pruned and turned to profit. A Frenchman is more easily killed than subdued. Even his follies generally spring from a high sense of national dignity and honour, which foreigners cannot but respect.’

“The Emperor Joseph while in France mixed in all sorts of society, to gain information with respect, to the popular feeling towards his sister, and instruction as to the manners and modes of life and thinking of the French. To this end he would often associate with the lowest of the common people, and generally gave them a louis for their loss of time in attending to him.

“One day, when he was walking with the young Princesse Elizabeth and myself in the public gardens at Versailles and in deep conversation with us, two or three of these louis ladies came up to my side and, not knowing who I was, whispered, ‘There’s no use in paying such attention to the stranger: after all, when he has got what he wants, he’ll only give you a louis apiece and then send you about your business.’”

Section 10

“I remember an old lady who could not bear to be told of deaths. ‘Psha! Pshaw!’ she would exclaim. ‘Bring me no tales of funerals! Talk of births and of those who are likely to be blest with them! These are the joys which gladden old hearts and fill youthful ones with ecstasy! It is our own reproduction in children which makes us quit the world happy and contented; because then we only retire to make room for another race, bringing with them all those faculties which are in us decayed; and capable, which we ourselves have ceased to be, of taking our parts and figuring on the stage of life so long as it may please the Supreme Manager to busy them in earthly scenes! Then talk no more to me of weeds and mourning, but show me christenings and all those who give employ to the baptismal font!’

“Such also was the exulting feeling of Marie Antoinette when she no longer doubted of her wished-for pregnancy. The idea of becoming a mother filled her soul with an exuberant delight, which made the very pavement on which she trod vibrate with the words, ‘I shall be a mother! I shall be a mother!’ She was so overjoyed that she not only made it public throughout France but despatches were sent off to all her royal relatives. And was not her rapture natural? so long as she had waited for the result of every youthful union, and so coarsely as she had been reproached with her misfortune! Now came her triumph. She could now prove to the world, like all the descendants of the house of Austria, that there was no defect with her. The satirists and the malevolent were silenced. Louis XVI., from the cold, insensible bridegroom, became the infatuated admirer of his long-neglected wife. The enthusiasm with which the event was hailed by all France atoned for the partial insults she had received before it. The splendid fetes, balls, and entertainments, indiscriminately lavished by all ranks throughout the kingdom on this occasion, augmented those of the Queen and the Court to a pitch of magnificence surpassing the most luxurious and voluptuous times of the great and brilliant Louis XIV. Entertainments were given even to the domestics of every description belonging to the royal establishments. Indeed, so general was the joy that, among those who could do no more, there could scarcely be found a father or mother in France who, before they took their wine, did not first offer up a prayer for the prosperous pregnancy of their beloved Queen.

“And yet, though the situation of Marie Antoinette was now become the theme of a whole nation’s exultation, she herself, the owner of the precious burthen, selected by Heaven as its special depositary, was the only one censured for expressing all her happiness!

“Those models of decorum, the virtuous Princesses, her aunts, deemed it highly indelicate in Her Majesty to have given public marks of her satisfaction to those deputed to compliment her on her prosperous situation. To avow the joy she felt was in their eyes indecent and unqueenly. Where was the shrinking bashfulness of that one of these Princesses who had herself been so clamorous to Louis XV. against her husband, the Duke of Modena, for not having consummated her own marriage?

“The party of the dismissed favourite Du Barry were still working underground. Their pestiferous vapours issued from the recesses of the earth, to obscure the brightness of the rising sun, which was now rapidly towering to its climax, to obliterate the little planets which had once endeavoured to eclipse its beautiful rays, but were now incapable of competition, and unable to endure its lustre. This malignant nest of serpents began to poison the minds of the courtiers, as soon as the pregnancy was obvious, by innuendoes on the partiality of the

Comte d'Artois for the Queen; and at length, infamously, and openly, dared to point him out as the cause?

"Thus, in the heart of the Court itself, originated this most atrocious slander, long before it reached the nation, and so much assisted to destroy Her Majesty's popularity with a people, who now adored her amiableness, her general kind-heartedness, and her unbounded charity.

"I have repeatedly seen the Queen and the Comte d'Artois together under circumstances in which there could have been no concealment of her real feelings; and I can firmly and boldly assert the falsehood of this allegation against my royal mistress. The only attentions Marie Antoinette received in the earlier part of her residence in France were from her grandfather and her brothers-in-law. Of these, the Comte d'Artois was the only one who, from youth and liveliness of character, thoroughly sympathised with his sister. But, beyond the little freedoms of two young and innocent playmates, nothing can be charged upon their intimacy,—no familiarity whatever farther than was warranted by their relationship. I can bear witness that Her Majesty's attachment for the Comte d'Artois never differed in its nature from what she felt for her brother the Emperor Joseph.[16]

"It is very likely that the slander of which I speak derived some colour of probability afterwards with the million, from the Queen's thoughtlessness, relative to the challenge which passed between the Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Bourbon. In right of my station, I was one of Her Majesty's confidential counsellors, and it became my duty to put restraint upon her inclinations, whenever I conceived they led her wrong. In this instance, I exercised my prerogative decidedly, and even so much so as to create displeasure; but I anticipated the consequences, which actually ensued, and preferred to risk my royal mistress's displeasure rather than her reputation. The dispute, which led to the duel, was on some point of etiquette; and the Baron de Besenval was to attend as second to one of the parties. From the Queen's attachment for her royal brother, she wished the affair to be amicably arranged, without the knowledge either of the King, who was ignorant of what had taken place, or of the parties; which could only be effected by her seeing the Baron in the most private manner. I opposed Her Majesty's allowing any interview with the Baron upon any terms, unless sanctioned by the King. This unexpected and peremptory refusal obliged the Queen to transfer her confidence to the librarian, who introduced the Baron into one of the private apartments of Her Majesty's women, communicating with that of the Queen, where Her Majesty could see the Baron without the exposure of passing any of the other attendants. The Baron was quite gray, and upwards of sixty years of age! But the self-conceited dotard soon caused the Queen to repent her misplaced confidence, and from his unwarrantable impudence on that occasion, when he found himself alone with the Queen, Her Majesty, though he was a constant member of the societies of the De Polignacs, ever after treated him with sovereign contempt.

"The Queen herself afterwards described to me the Baron's presumptuous attack upon her credulity. From this circumstance I thenceforward totally excluded him from my parties, where Her Majesty was always a regular visitor.

"The coolness to which my determination not to allow the interview gave rise between Her Majesty and myself was but momentary. The Queen had too much discernment not to appreciate the basis upon which my denial was grounded, even before she was convinced by

[16] *When the King thought proper to be reconciled to the Queen after the death of his grandfather, Louis XV., and when she became a mother, she really was very much attached to Louis XVI., as may be proved from her never quitting him, and suffering all the horrid sacrifices she endured, through the whole period of the Revolution, rather than leave her husband, her children, or her sister. Marie Antoinette might have saved her life twenty times, had not the King's safety, united with her own and that of her family, impelled her to reject every proposition of self-preservation.*

the result how correct had been my reflection. She felt her error, and, by the mediation of the Duke of Dorset, we were reunited more closely than ever, and so, I trust, we shall remain till death!

“There was much more attempted to be made of another instance, in which I exercised the duty of my office, than the truth justified—the nightly promenades on the terrace at Versailles, or at Trianon. Though no amusement could have been more harmless or innocent for a private individual, yet I certainly, disapproved it for a Queen, and therefore withheld the sanction of my attendance. My sole objection was on the score of dignity. I well knew that Du Barry and her infamous party were constant spies upon the Queen on every occasion of such a nature; and that they would not fail to exaggerate her every movement to her prejudice. Though Du Barry could not form one of the party, which was a great source of heartburning, it was easy for her, under the circumstances, to mingle with the throng. When I suggested these objections to the Queen, Her Majesty, feeling no inward cause of reproach, and being sanctioned in what she did by the King himself, laughed at the idea of these little excursions affording food for scandal. I assured Her Majesty that I had every reason to be convinced that Du Barry was often in disguise, not far from the seat where Her Majesty and the Princesse Elizabeth could be overheard in their most secret conversations with each other. ‘Listeners,’ replied the Queen, ‘never hear any good of themselves.’

“‘My dear Lamballe,’ she continued, ‘you have taken such a dislike to this woman that you cannot conceive she can be occupied but in mischief. This is uncharitable. She certainly has no reason to be dissatisfied with either the King or myself. We have both left her in the full enjoyment of all she possessed, except the right of appearing at Court or continuing in the society her conduct had too long disgraced.’

“I said it was very true, but that I should be happier to find Her Majesty so scrupulous as never to give an opportunity even for the falsehoods of her enemies.

“Her Majesty turned the matter off, as usual, by saying she had no idea of injuring others, and could not believe that any one would wantonly injure her, adding, ‘The Duchess and the Princesse Elizabeth, my two sisters, and all the other ladies, are coming to hear the concert this evening, and you will be delighted.’

“I excused myself under the plea of the night air disagreeing with my health, and returned to Versailles without ever making myself one of the nocturnal members of Her Majesty’s society, well knowing she could dispense with my presence, there being more than enough ever ready to hurry her by their own imprudence into the folly of despising criticisms, which I always endeavoured to avoid, though I did not fear them. Of these I cannot but consider her secretary as one. The following circumstance connected with the promenades is a proof:

“The Abbe Vermond was present one day when Marie Antoinette observed that she felt rather indisposed. I attributed it to Her Majesty’s having lightened her dress and exposed herself too much to the night air. ‘Heavens, madame!’ cried the Abbe, ‘would you always have Her Majesty cased up in steel armour, and not take the fresh air, without being surrounded by a troop of horse and foot, as a Field-marshal is when going to storm a fortress? Pray, Princess, now that Her Majesty, has freed herself from the annoying shackles of Madame Etiquette (the Comtesse de Noailles), let her enjoy the pleasure of a simple robe and breathe freely the fresh morning dew, as has been her custom all her life (and as her mother before her, the Empress Maria Theresa, has done and continues to do, even to this day), unfettered by antiquated absurdities! Let me be anything rather than a Queen of France, if I must be doomed to the slavery of such tyrannical rules!’

"'True; but, sir,' replied I, 'you should reflect that if you were a Queen of France, France, in making you mistress of her destinies, and placing you at the head of her nation, would in return look for respect from you to her customs and manners. I am born an Italian, but I renounced all national peculiarities of thinking and acting the moment I set my foot on French ground.'

"'And so did I,' said Marie Antoinette.

"'I know you did, Madame,' I answered; but I am replying to your preceptor; and I only wish he saw things in the same light I do. When we are at Rome, we should do as Rome does. You have never had a regicide Bertrand de Gurdon, a Ravillac or a Damiens in Germany; but they have been common in France, and the Sovereigns of France cannot be too circumspect in their maintenance of ancient etiquette to command the dignified respect of a frivolous and versatile people.'

"The Queen, though she did not strictly adhere to my counsels or the Abbe's advice, had too much good sense to allow herself to be prejudiced against me by her preceptor; but the Abbe never entered on the propriety or impropriety of the Queen's conduct before me, and from the moment I have mentioned studiously avoided, in my presence, anything which could lead to discussion on the change of dress and amusements introduced by Her Majesty.

"Although I disapproved of Her Majesty's deviations from established forms in this, or, indeed, any respect, yet I never, before or after, expressed my opinion before a third person.

"Never should I have been so firmly and so long attached to Marie Antoinette, had I not known that her native thorough goodness of heart had been warped and misguided, though acting at the same time with the best intentions, by a false notion of her real innocence being a sufficient shield against the public censure of such innovations upon national prejudices, as she thought prayer to introduce,—the fatal error of conscious rectitude, encouraged in its regardlessness of appearances by those very persons who well knew that it is only by appearances a nation can judge of its rulers.

"I remember a ludicrous circumstance arising from the Queen's innocent curiosity, in which, if there were anything to blame, I myself am to be censured for lending myself to it so heartily to satisfy Her Majesty.

"When the Chevalier d'Eon was allowed to return to France, Her Majesty expressed a particular inclination to see this extraordinary character. From prudential as well as political motives, she was at first easily persuaded to repress her desire. However, by a most ludicrous occurrence, it was revived, and nothing would do but she must have a sight of the being who had for some time been the talk of every society, and at the period to which I allude was become the mirth of all Paris.

"The Chevalier being one day in a very large party of both sexes, in which, though his appearance had more of the old soldier in it than of the character he was compelled 'malgre lui', to adopt, many of the guests having no idea to what sex this nondescript animal really belonged, the conversation after dinner happened to turn on the manly exercise of fencing.[17]

Heated by a subject to him so interesting, the Chevalier, forgetful of the respect due to his assumed garb, started from his seat, and, pulling up his petticoats, threw himself on guard. Though dressed in male attire underneath, this sudden freak sent all the ladies—and many of the gentlemen out of the room in double—quick time. The Chevalier, however, instantly

[17] *It may be necessary to observe here that the Chevalier, having for some particular motives been banished from France, was afterwards permitted to return only on condition of never appearing but in the disguised dress of a female, though he was always habited in the male costume underneath it.*

recovering from the first impulse, quietly pat down his, upper garment, and begged pardon in, a gentlemanly manner for having for a moment deviated from the forma of his imposed situation. All, the gossips of Paris were presently amused with the story, which, of coarse, reached the Court, with every droll particular of the pulling up and clapping down the cumbrous paraphernalia of a hoop petticoat.

“The King and Queen, from the manner in which they enjoyed the tale when told them (and certainly it lost nothing in the report), would not have been the least amused of the party had they been present. His Majesty shook the room with laughing, and the Queen, the Princesse Elizabeth, and the other ladies were convulsed at the description.

“When we were alone, ‘How I should like,’ said the Queen, ‘to see this curious man-woman!’—‘Indeed,’ replied I, ‘I have not less curiosity than yourself, and I think we may contrive to let Your Majesty have a peep at him—her, I mean!—without compromising your dignity, or offending the Minister who interdicted the Chevalier from appearing in your presence. I know he has expressed the greatest mortification, and that his wish to see Your Majesty is almost irrepressible.’

“‘But how will you be able to contrive this without its being known to the King, or to the Comte de Vergennes, who would never forgive me?’ exclaimed Her Majesty.

“‘Why, on Sunday, when you go to chapel, I will cause him, by some means or other, to make his appearance, en grande costume, among the group of ladies who are generally waiting there to be presented to Your Majesty.’

“‘Oh, you charming creature!’ said the Queen. ‘But won’t the Minister banish or exile him for it?’

“‘No, no! He has only been forbidden an audience of Your Majesty at Court,’ I replied.

“In good earnest, on the Sunday following, the Chevalier was dressed en costume, with a large hoop, very long train, sack, five rows of ruffles, an immensely high powdered female wig, very beautiful lappets, white gloves, an elegant fan in his hand, his beard closely shaved, his neck and ears adorned with diamond rings and necklaces, and assuming all the airs and graces of a fine lady!

“But, unluckily, his anxiety was so great, the moment the Queen made her appearance, to get a sight of Her Majesty, that, on rushing before the other ladies, his wig and head-dress fell off his head; and, before they could be well replaced, he made so, ridiculous a figure, by clapping them, in his confusion, hind part before, that the King, the Queen, and the whole suite, could scarcely refrain from laughing; aloud in the church.

“Thus ended the long longed for sight of this famous man-woman!

“As to me, it was a great while before I could recover myself. Even now, I laugh whenever I think of this great lady deprived of her head ornaments, with her bald pate laid bare, to the derision of such a multitude of Parisians, always prompt to divert themselves at the expense of others. However, the affair passed off unheeded, and no one but the Queen and myself ever knew that we ourselves had been innocently the cause of this comical adventure. When we met after Mass, we were so overpowered, that neither of us could speak for laughing. The Bishop who officiated said it was lucky he had no sermon to preach that day, for it would have been difficult for him to have recollected himself, or to have maintained his gravity. The ridiculous appearance of the Chevalier, he added, was so continually presenting itself before him during the service that it was as much as he could do to restrain himself from laughing, by keeping his eyes constantly riveted on the book. Indeed, the oddity of the affair was greatly heightened when, in the middle of the Mass, some charitable hand having adjusted the

wig of the Chevalier, he re-entered the chapel as if nothing had happened, and, placing himself exactly opposite the altar, with his train upon his arm, stood fanning himself, a la coquette, with an inflexible self-possession which only rendered it the more difficult for those around him to maintain their composure.

“Thus ended the Queen’s curiosity. The result only made the Chevalier’s company in greater request, for every one became more anxious than ever to know the masculine lady who had lost her wig!”

BOOK 2

Section 1

[From the time that the Princesse de Lamballe saw the ties between the Queen and her favourite De Polignac drawing closer she became less assiduous in her attendance at Court, being reluctant to importune the friends by her presence at an intimacy which she did not approve. She could not, however, withhold her accustomed attentions, as the period of Her Majesty's accouchement approached; and she has thus noted the circumstance of the birth of the Duchesse d'Angouleme, on the 19th of December, 1778.]

"The moment for the accomplishment of the Queen's darling hope was now at hand: she was about to become a mother.

"It had been agreed between Her Majesty and myself, that I was to place myself so near the accoucheur, Vermond,[18] as to be the first to distinguish the sex of the new-born infant, and if she should be delivered of a Dauphin to say, in Italian, 'Il figlio e nato.'

"Her Majesty was, however, foiled even in this the most blissful of her desires. She was delivered of a daughter instead of a Dauphin.

"From the immense crowd that burst into the apartment the instant Vermond said, The Queen is happily delivered, Her Majesty was nearly suffocated. I had hold of her hand, and as I said 'La regina e andato', mistaking 'andato' for 'nato', between the joy of giving birth to a son and the pressure of the crowd, Her Majesty fainted. Overcome by the dangerous situation in which I saw my royal mistress, I myself was carried out of the room in a lifeless state. The situation of Her Majesty was for some time very doubtful, till the people were dragged with violence from about her, that she might have air. On her recovering, the King was the first person who told her that she was the mother of a very fine Princess.

"'Well, then,' said the Queen, 'I am like my mother, for at my birth she also wished for a son instead of a daughter; and you have lost your wager:' for the King had betted with Maria Theresa that it would be a son.

"The King answered her by repeating the lines Metastasio had written on that occasion.

"'Io perdei: l'augusta figlia
A pagar, m'a condemnato;
Ma s'e ver the a voi somiglia
Tutto il moudo ha guadagnato.'"[19]

"The public feeling had undergone a great change with respect to Her Majesty from the time of her first accouchement. Still, she was not the mother of a future King. The people looked

[18] *Brother to the Abbe, whose pride was so great at this honour conferred on his relative, that he never spoke of him without denominating him Monsieur mon frere, d'accoucher de sa Majeste, Vermond.*

[19] *The Princesse de Lamballe again ceased to be constantly about the Queen. Her danger was over, she was a mother, and the attentions of disinterested friendship were no longer indispensable. She herself about this time met with a deep affliction. She lost both of her own parents; and to her sorrows may, in a great degree, be ascribed her silence upon the events which intervened between the birth of Madame and that of the Dauphin. She was as assiduous as ever in her attentions to Her Majesty on her second lying-in. The circumstances of the death of Maria Theresa, the Queen's mother, in the interval which divided the two accouchements, and Her Majesty's anguish, and refusal to see any but De Lamballe and De Polignac, are too well known to detain us longer from the notes of the Princess. It is enough for the reader to know that the friendship of Her Majesty for her superintendent seemed to be gradually reviving in all its early enthusiasm, by her unremitting kindness during the confinements of the Queen, till, at length, they became more attached than ever. But, not to anticipate, let me return to the narrative.*

upon her as belonging to them more than she had done before, and faction was silenced by the general delight. But she had not yet attained the climax of her felicity. A second pregnancy gave a new excitement to the nation; and, at length, on the 22nd October, 1781, dawned the day of hope.

“In consequence of what happened on the first accouchement, measures were taken to prevent similar disasters on the second. The number admitted into the apartment was circumscribed. The silence observed left the Queen in uncertainty of the sex to which she had given birth, till, with tears of joy, the King said to her: ‘Madame, the hopes of the nation, and mine, are fulfilled. You are the mother of a Dauphin.’

“The Princesse Elizabeth and myself were so overjoyed that we embraced every one in the room.

“At this time Their Majesties were adored. Marie Antoinette, with all her beauty and amiableness, was a mere cipher in the eyes of France previous to her becoming the mother of an heir to the Crown; but her popularity now arose to a pitch of unequalled enthusiasm.

“I have heard of but one expression to Her Majesty upon this occasion in any way savouring of discontent. This came from the royal aunts. On Marie Antoinette’s expressing to them her joy in having brought a Dauphin to the nation, they replied, ‘We will only repeat our father’s observation on a similar subject. When one of our sisters complained to his late Majesty that, as her Italian husband had copied the Dauphin’s whim, she could not, though long a bride, boast of being a wife, or hope to become a mother—“a prudent Princess,” replied Louis XV., “never wants heirs!”’ But the feeling of the royal aunts was an exception to the general sentiment, which really seemed like madness.

“I remember a proof of this which happened at the time. Chancing to cross the King’s path as he was going to Marly and I coming from Rambouillet, my two postillions jumped from their horses, threw themselves on the high road upon their knees, though it was very dirty, and remained there, offering up their benedictions, till he was out of sight.

“The felicity of the Queen was too great not to be soon overcast. The unbounded influence of the De Polignacs was now at its zenith. It could not fail of being attacked. Every engine of malice, envy, and detraction was let loose; and, in the vilest calumnies against the character of the Duchess, her royal mistress was included.

“It was, in truth, a most singular fatality, in the life of Marie Antoinette that she could do nothing, however beneficial or disinterested, for which she was not either criticised or censured. She had a tenacity, of character which made her cling more closely to attachments from which she saw others desirous of estranging her; and this firmness, however excellent in principle, was, in her case, fatal in its effects. The Abbe Vermond, Her Majesty’s confessor and tutor, and, unfortunately, in many respects, her ambitious guide, was really alarmed at the rising favour of the Duchess; and, though he knew the very obstacles thrown in her way only strengthened her resolution as to any favourite object, yet he ventured to head an intrigue to destroy the great influence of the De Polignacs, which, as he might have foreseen, only served to hasten their aggrandisement.

“At this crisis the dissipation of the Duc de Guemenee caused him to become a bankrupt. I know not whether it can be said in principle, but certainly it may in property, ‘It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.’ The Princess, his wife, having been obliged to leave her residence at Versailles, in consequence of the Duke’s dismissal from the King’s service on account of the disordered state of his pecuniary circumstances, the situation of governess to the royal children became necessarily vacant, and was immediately transferred to the Duchesse de Polignac. The Queen, to enable her friend to support her station with all the eclat

suitable to its dignity, took care to supply ample means from her own private purse. A most magnificent suite of apartments was ordered to be arranged, under the immediate inspection of the Queen's maitre d'hotel, at Her Majesty's expense.

"Is there anything on earth more natural than the lively interest which inspires a mother towards those who have the care of her offspring? What, then, must have been the feelings of a Queen of France who had been deprived of that blessing for which connubial attachments are formed, and which, vice versa, constitutes the only real happiness of every young female, what must have been, I say, the ecstasy of Marie Antoinette when she not only found herself a mother, but the dear pledges of all her future bliss in the hands of one whose friendship allowed her the unrestrained exercise of maternal affection,—a climax of felicity combining not only the pleasures of an ordinary mother, but the greatness, the dignity, and the flattering popularity of a Queen of France.

"Though the pension of the Duchesse de Polignac was no more than that usually allotted to all former governesses of the royal children of France, yet circumstances tempted her to a display not a little injurious to her popularity as well as to that of her royal mistress. She gave too many pretexts to imputations of extravagance. Yet she had neither patronage, nor sinecures, nor immunities beyond the few inseparable from the office she held, and which had been the same for centuries under the Monarchy of France. But it must be remembered, as an excuse for the splendour of her establishment, that she entered her office upon a footing very different from that of any of her predecessors. Her mansion was not the quiet, retired, simple household of the governess of the royal children, as formerly: it had become the magnificent resort of the first Queen in Europe; the daily haunt of Her Majesty. The Queen certainly visited the former governess, as she had done the Duchesse de Duras and many other frequenters of her Court parties; but she made the Duchesse de Polignac's her Court; and all the courtiers of that Court, and, I may say, the great personages of all France, as well as the Ministers and all foreigners of distinction, held there their usual rendezvous; consequently, there was nothing wanting but the guards in attendance in the Queen's apartments to have made it a royal residence suitable for the reception of the illustrious personages that were in the constant habit of visiting these levees, assemblies, balls, routs, picnics, dinner, supper, and card parties.[20]

"Much as some of the higher classes of the nobility felt aggrieved at the preference given by the Queen to the Duchesse de Polignac, that which raised against Her Majesty the most implacable resentment was her frequenting the parties of her favourite more than those of any other of the 'haut ton'. These assemblies, from the situation held by the Duchess, could not always be the most select. Many of the guests who chanced to get access to them from a mere glimpse of the Queen—whose general good-humour, vivacity, and constant wish to please all around her would often make her commit herself unconsciously and unintentionally—would

[20] *I have seen ladies at the Princesse de Lamballe's come from these card parties with their laps so blackened by the quantities of gold received in them, that they have been obliged to change their dresses to go to supper. Many a chevalier d'industree and young military spendthrift has made his harvest here. Thousands were won and lost, and the ladies were generally the dupes of all those who were the constant speculative attendants. The Princease de Lamballe did not like play, but when it was necessary she did play, and won or lost to a limited extent; but the prescribed sum once exhausted or gained she left off. In set parties, such as those of whist, she never played except when one was wanted, often excusing herself on the score of its requiring more attention than it was in her power to give to it and her reluctance to sacrifice her partner; though I have heard Beau Dillon, the Duke of Dorset, Lord Edward Dillon, and many others say that she understood and played the game much better than many who had a higher opinion of their skill in it. Lord Edward Fitzgerald was admitted to the parties at the Duchesse de Polignac's on his first coming to Paris; but when his connection with the Duc d'Orleans and Madame de Genlis became known he was informed that his society would be dispensed with. The famous, or rather the infamous, Beckford was also excluded.*

fabricate anecdotes of things they had neither seen nor heard; and which never had existence, except in their own wicked imaginations. The scene of the inventions, circulated against Her Majesty through France, was, in consequence, generally placed at the Duchess's; but they were usually so distinctly and obviously false that no notice was taken of them, nor was any attempt made to check their promulgation.

"Exemplary as was the friendship between this enthusiastic pair, how much more fortunate for both would it have been had it never happened! I foresaw the results long, long before they took place; but the Queen was not to be thwarted. Fearful she might attribute my anxiety for her general safety to unworthy personal views, I was often silent, even when duty bade me speak. I was, perhaps, too scrupulous about seeming officious or jealous of the predilection shown to the Duchess. Experience had taught me the inutility of representing consequences, and I had no wish to quarrel with the Queen. Indeed, there was a degree of coldness towards me on the part of Her Majesty for having gone so far as I had done. It was not until after the birth of the Duc de Normandie, her third child, in March, 1785, that her friendship resumed its primitive warmth.

"As the children grew, Her Majesty's attachment for their governess grew with them. All that has been said of Tasso's Armida was nothing to this luxurious temple of maternal affection. Never was female friendship more strongly cemented, or less disturbed by the nauseous poison of envy, malice, or mean jealousy. The Queen was in the plenitude of every earthly enjoyment, from being able to see and contribute to the education of the children she tenderly loved, unrestrained by the gothic etiquette with which all former royal mothers had been fettered, but which the kind indulgence of the Duchesse de Polignac broke through, as unnatural and unworthy of the enlightened and affectionate. The Duchess was herself an attentive, careful mother. She felt for the Queen, and encouraged her maternal sympathies, so doubly endeared by the long, long disappointment which had preceded their gratification. The sacrifice of all the cold forms of state policy by the new governess, and the free access she gave the royal mother to her children, so unprecedented in the Court of France, rendered Marie Antoinette so grateful that it may justly be said she divided her heart between the governess and the governed. Habit soon made it necessary for her existence that she should dedicate the whole of her time, not taken up in public ceremonies or parties, to the cultivation of the minds of her children. Conscious of her own deficiency in this respect, she determined to redeem this error in her offspring. The love of the frivolous amusements of society, for which the want of higher cultivation left room in her mind, was humoured by the gaieties of the Duchesse de Polignac's assemblies; while her nobler dispositions were encouraged by the privileges of the favourite's station. Thus, all her inclinations harmonising with the habits and position of her friend, Marie Antoinette literally passed the greatest part of some years in company with the Duchesse de Polignac,—either amidst the glare and bustle of public recreation, or in the private apartment of the governess and her children, increasing as much as possible the kindness of the one for the benefit and comfort of the others. The attachment of the Duchess to the royal children was returned by the Queen's affection for the offspring of the Duchess. So much was Her Majesty interested in favour of the daughter of the Duchess, that, before that young lady was fifteen years of age, she herself contrived and accomplished her marriage with the Duc de Guiche, then 'maitre de ceremonie' to Her Majesty, and whose interests were essentially, promoted by this alliance.[21]

[21] *The Duc de Guiche, since Duc de Grammont, has proved how much he merited the distinction he received, in consequence of the attachment between the Queen and his mother-in-law, by the devotedness with which he followed the fallen fortunes of the Bourbons till their restoration, since which he has not been forgotten. The Duchess, his wife, who at her marriage was beaming with all the beauties of her age, and adorned by art and nature with every accomplishment, though she came into notice at a time when the Court had scarcely*

“The great cabals, which agitated the Court in consequence of the favour shown to the De Polignacs, were not slow in declaring themselves. The Comtesse de Noailles was one of the foremost among the discontented. Her resignation, upon the appointment of a superintendent, was a sufficient evidence of her real feeling; but when she now saw a place filled, to which she conceived her family had a claim, her displeasure could not be silent, and her dislike to the Queen began to express itself without reserve.

“Another source of dissatisfaction against the Queen was her extreme partiality for the English. After the peace of Versailles, in 1783, the English flocked into France, and I believe if a poodle dog had come from England it would have met with a good reception from Her Majesty. This was natural enough. The American war had been carried on entirely against her wish; though, from the influence she was supposed to exercise in the Cabinet, it was presumed to have been managed entirely by herself. This odious opinion she wished personally to destroy; and it could only be done by the distinction with which, after the peace, she treated the whole English nation.’[22]

“Several of the English nobility were on a familiar footing at the parties of the Duchesse de Polignac. This was quite enough for the slanderers. They were all ranked, and that publicly, as lovers of Her Majesty. I recollect when there were no less than five different private commissioners out, to suppress the libels that were in circulation over all France, against the Queen and Lord Edward Dillon, the Duke of Dorset, Lord George Conway, Arthur Dillon, as well as Count Fersen, the Duc de Lauzun, and the Comte d’Artois, who were all not only constant frequenters of Polignac’s but visitors of Marie Antoinette.

“By the false policy of Her Majesty’s advisers, these enemies and libellers, instead of being brought to the condign punishment their infamy deserved, were privately hushed into silence, out of delicacy to the Queen’s feelings, by large sums of money and pensions, which encouraged numbers to commit the same enormity in the hope of obtaining the same recompense.

recovered itself from the debauched morals by which it had been so long degraded by a De Pompadour and a Du Barry, has yet preserved her character, by the strictness of her conduct, free from the censorious criticisms of an epoch in which some of the purest could not escape unassailed. I saw her at Pyrmont in 1803; and even then, though the mother of many children, she looked as young and beautiful as ever. She was remarkably well educated and accomplished, a profound musician on the harp and pianoforte, graceful in her conversation, and a most charming dancer. She seemed to bear the vicissitudes of fortune with a philosophical courage and resignation not often to be met with in light-headed French women. She was amiable in her manners, easy of access, always lively and cheerful, and enthusiastically attached to the country whence she was then excluded. She constantly accompanied the wife of the late Louis XVIII. during her travels in Germany, as her husband the Duke did His Majesty during his residence at Mittau, in Courland, etc. I have had the honour of seeing the Duke twice since the Revolution; once, on my coming from Russia, at General Binkingdroff’s, Governor of Mittau, and since, in Portland Place, at the French Ambassador’s, on his coming to England in the name of his Sovereign, to congratulate the King of England on his accession to the throne.

[22] *The daughter of the Duchesse de Polignac (of my meeting with whom I have already spoken in a note), entering with me upon the subject of France and of old times, observed that had the Queen limited her attachment to the person of her mother, she would not have given all the annoyance which she did to the nobility. It was to these partialities to the English, the Duchesse de Guiche Grammont alluded. I do not know the lady’s name distinctly, but I am certain I have heard the beautiful Lady Sarah Bunbury mentioned by the Princesse de Lamballe as having received particular attention from the Queen; for the Princess had heard much about this lady and “a certain great personage” in England; but, on discovering her acquaintance with the Duc de Lauzun, Her Majesty withdrew from the intimacy, though not soon enough to prevent its having given food for scandal. “You must remember,” added the Duchesse de Guiche Grammont, “how much the Queen was censured for her enthusiasm about Lady Spencer.” I replied that I did remember the much-ado about nothing there was regarding some English lady, to whom the Queen took a liking, whose name I could not exactly recall; but I knew well she studied to please the English in general. Of this Lady Spencer it is that the Princess speaks in one of the following pages of this chapter.*

“But these were mercenary wretches, from whom no better could have been expected. A legitimate mode of robbery had been pressed upon their notice by the Government itself, and they thought it only a matter of fair speculation to make the best of it. There were some libellers, however, of a higher order, in comparison with whose motives for slander, those of the mere scandal-jobbers were white as the driven snow. Of these, one of the worst was the Duc de Lauzun.

“The first motive of the Queen’s strong dislike to the Duc de Lauzun sprang from Her Majesty’s attachment to the Duchesse d’Orleans, whom she really loved. She was greatly displeased at the injury inflicted upon her valued friend by De Lauzun, in estranging the affection of the Duc d’Orleans from his wife by introducing him to depraved society. Among the associates to which this connection led the Duc d’Orleans were a certain Madame Duthee and Madame Buffon.

“When De Lauzun, after having been expelled from the drawing-room of the Queen for his insolent presumption,—[The allusion here is to the affair of the heron plume.]—meeting with coolness at the King’s levee, sought to cover his disgrace by appearing at the assemblies of the Duchesse de Polignac, Her Grace was too sincerely the friend of her Sovereign and benefactress not to perceive the drift of his conduct. She consequently signified to the self-sufficient coxcomb that her assemblies were not open to the public. Being thus shut out from Their Majesties, and, as a natural result, excluded from the most brilliant societies of Paris, De Lauzun, from a most diabolical spirit of revenge, joined the nefarious party which had succeeded in poisoning the mind of the Duc d’Orleans, and from the hordes of which, like the burning lava from Etna, issued calumnies which swept the most virtuous and innocent victims that ever breathed to their destruction!

“Among the Queen’s favourites, and those most in request at the De Polignac parties, was the good Lady Spencer, with whom I became most intimately acquainted when I first went to England; and from whom, as well as from her two charming daughters, the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Duncannon, since Lady Besborough, I received the greatest marks of cordial hospitality. In consequence, when her ladyship came to France, I hastened to present her to the Queen. Her Majesty, taking a great liking to the amiable Englishwoman, and wishing to profit by her private conversations and society, gave orders that Lady Spencer should pass to her private closet whenever she came to Versailles, without the formal ceremony of waiting in the antechamber to be announced.

“One day, Her Majesty, Lady Spencer, and myself were observing the difficulty there was in acquiring a correct pronunciation of the English language, when Lady Spencer remarked that it only required a little attention.

“‘I beg your pardon,’ said the Queen, ‘that’s not all, because there are many things you do not call by their proper names, as they are in the dictionary.’

“‘Pray what are they, please Your Majesty?’

“‘Well, I will give you an instance. For example, ‘les culottes’—what do you call them?’

“‘Small clothes,’ replied her ladyship.

“‘Ma foi! how can they be called small clothes for one large man? Now I do look in the dictionary, and I find, for the word culottes—breeches.’

“‘Oh, please Your Majesty, we never call them by that name in England.’

“‘Voila done, j’ai raison!’

“‘We say “inexpressibles”!’

"'Ah, c'est mieux! Dat do please me ver much better. Il y a du bon sens la dedans. C'est une autre chose!'

"In the midst of this curious dialogue, in came the Duke of Dorset, Lord Edward Dillon, Count Fersen, and several English gentlemen, who, as they were going to the King's hunt, were all dressed in new buckskin breeches.

"'I do not like,' exclaimed the Queen to them, dem yellow irresistibles!'

"Lady Spencer nearly fainted. 'Vat make you so frightful, my dear lady?' said the Queen to her ladyship, who was covering her face with her hands. 'I am terrified at Your Majesty's mistake'—'Comment? did you no tell me just now, dat in England de lady call les culottes "irresistibles"?'—'Oh, mercy! I never could have made such a mistake, as to have applied to that part of the male dress such a word. I said, please Your Majesty, inexpressibles.'

"On this the gentlemen all laughed most heartily.

"'Vell, vell,' replied the Queen, 'do, my dear lady, discompose yourself. I vill no more call de breeches irresistibles, but say small clothes, if even elles sont upon a giant!'

"At the repetition of the naughty word breeches, poor Lady Spencer's English delicacy quite overcame her. Forgetting where she was, and also the company she was in, she ran from the room with her cross stick in her hand, ready to lay it on the shoulders of any one who should attempt to obstruct her passage, flew into her carriage, and drove off full speed, as if fearful of being contaminated,—all to the no small amusement of the male guests.

"Her Majesty and I laughed till the very tears ran down our cheeks. The Duke of Dorset, to keep up the joke, said there really were some counties in England where they called 'culottes irresistibles.

"Now that I am upon the subject of England, and the peace of 1783, which brought such throngs of English over to France, there occurs to me a circumstance, relating to the treaty of commerce signed at that time, which exhibits the Comte de Vergennes to some advantage; and with that let me dismiss the topic.

"The Comte de Vergennes, was one of the most distinguished Ministers of France. I was intimately acquainted with him. His general character for uprightness prompted his Sovereign to govern in a manner congenial to his own goodness of heart, which was certainly most for the advantage of his subjects. Vergennes cautioned Louis against the hypocritical adulations of his privileged courtiers. The Count had been schooled in State policy by the great Venetian senator, Francis Foscari, the subtlest politician of his age, whom he consulted during his life on every important matter; and he was not very easily to be deceived.

"When the treaty of commerce took place, at the period I mention, the experienced Vergennes foresaw—what afterwards really happened—that France would be inundated with British manufactures; but Calonne obstinately maintained the contrary, till he was severely reminded of the consequence of his misguided policy, in the insults inflicted on him by enraged mobs of thousands of French artificers, whenever he appeared in public. But though the mania for British goods had literally caused an entire stagnation of business in the French manufacturing towns, and thrown throngs upon the 'pave' for want of employment, yet M. de Calonne either did not see, or pretended not to see, the errors he had committed. Being informed that the Comte de Vergennes had attributed the public disorders to his fallacious policy, M. de Calonne sent a friend to the Count demanding satisfaction for the charge of having caused the riots. The Count calmly replied that he was too much of a man of honour to take so great an advantage, as to avail himself of the opportunity offered, by killing a man who had only one life to dispose of, when there were so many with a prior claim, who were

anxious to destroy him ‘en societe’. I Bid M. de Calonne,’ continued the Count, ‘first get out of that scrape, as the English boxers do when their eyes are closed up after a pitched battle. He has been playing at blind man’s buff, but the poverty to which he has reduced so many of our tradespeople has torn the English bandage from his eyes!’ For three or four days the Comte de Vergennes visited publicly, and showed himself everywhere in and about Paris; but M. de Calonne was so well convinced of the truth of the old fox’s satire that he pocketed his annoyance, and no more was said about fighting. Indeed, the Comte de Vergennes gave hints of being able to show that M. de Calonne had been bribed into the treaty.”

[The Princesse de Lamballe has alluded in a former page to the happiness which the Queen enjoyed during the visits of the foreign Princes to the Court of France. Her papers contain a few passages upon the opinions Her Majesty entertained of the royal travellers; which, although in the order of time they should have been mentioned before the peace with England, yet, not to disturb the chain of the narrative, respecting the connection with the Princesse de Lamballe, of the prevailing libels, and the partiality shown towards the English, I have reserved them for the conclusion of the present chapter. The timidity of the Queen in the presence of the illustrious strangers, and her agitation when about to receive them, have, I think, been already spoken of. Upon the subject of the royal travellers themselves, and other personages, the Princess expresses herself thus:]

“The Queen had never been an admirer of Catharine II. Notwithstanding her studied policy for the advancement of civilization in her internal empire, the means which, aided by the Princess Dashkoff, she made use of to seat herself on the imperial throne of her weak husband, Peter the Third, had made her more understood than esteemed. Yet when her son, the Grand Duke of the North,—[Afterwards the unhappy Emperor Paul.]—and the Grand Duchess, his wife, came to France, their description of Catharine’s real character so shocked the maternal sensibility of Marie Antoinette that she could scarcely hear the name of the Empress without shuddering. The Grand Duke spoke of Catharine without the least disguise.

“He said he travelled merely for the security of his life from his mother, who had surrounded him with creatures that were his sworn enemies, her own spies and infamous favourites, to whose caprices they were utterly subordinate. He was aware that the dangerous credulity of the Empress might be every hour excited by these wretches to the destruction of himself and his Duchess, and, therefore, he had in absence sought the only refuge. He had no wish, he said, ever to return to his native country, till Heaven should check his mother’s doubts respecting his dutiful filial affection towards her, or till God should be pleased to take her into His sacred keeping.

“The King was petrified at the Duke’s description of his situation, and the Queen could not refrain from tears when the Duchess, his wife, confirmed all her husband had uttered on the subject. The Duchess said she had been warned by the untimely fate of the Princess d’Armstadt, her predecessor, the first wife of the Grand Duke, to elude similar jealousy and suspicion on the part of her mother-in-law, by seclusion from the Court, in a country residence with her husband; indeed, that she had made it a point never to visit Petersburg, except on the express invitation of the Empress, as if she had been a foreigner.

“In this system the Grand Duchess persevered, even after her return from her travels. When she became pregnant, and drew near her accouchement, the Empress-mother permitted her to come to Petersburg for that purpose; but, as soon as the ceremony required by the etiquette of the Imperial Court on those occasions ended, the Duchess immediately returned to her hermitage.

"This Princess was remarkably well-educated; she possessed a great deal of good, sound sense, and had profited by the instructions of some of the best German tutors during her very early years. It was the policy of her father, the Duke of Wirtemberg, who had a large family, to educate his children as 'quietists' in matters of religion. He foresaw that the natural charms and acquired abilities of his daughters would one day call them to be the ornaments of the most distinguished Courts in Europe, and he thought it prudent not to instil early prejudices in favour of peculiar forms of religion which might afterwards present an obstacle to their aggrandisement.[23]

"The notorious vices of the King of Denmark, and his total neglect both of his young Queen, Carolina Matilda, and of the interest of his distant dominions, while in Paris, created a feeling in the Queen's mind towards that house which was not a little heightened by her disgust at the King of Sweden, when he visited the Court of Versailles. This King, though much more crafty than his brother-in-law, the King of Denmark, who revelled openly in his depravities, was not less vicious. The deception he made use of in usurping part of the rights of his people, combined with the worthlessness and duplicity, of his private conduct, excited a strong indignation in the mind of Marie Antoinette, of which she was scarcely capable of withholding the expression in his presence.

"It was during the visit of the Duke and Duchess of the North, that the Cardinal de Rohan again appeared upon the scene. For eight or ten years he had never been allowed to show himself at Court, and had been totally shut out of every society where the Queen visited. On the arrival of the illustrious, travellers at Versailles, the Queen, at her own expense, gave them a grand fete at her private palace, in the gardens of Trianon, similar to the one given by the Comte de Provence—[Afterwards Louis XVIII.]—to Her Majesty, in the gardens of Brunoi.

"On the eve of the fete, the Cardinal waited upon, me to know if he would be permitted to appear there in the character he had the honour to hold at Court, I replied that I had made it a rule never to interfere in the private or public amusements of the Court, and that His Eminence must be the best judge how far he, could obtrude himself upon the Queen's private parties, to which only a select number had been invited, in consequence of the confined spot where the fete was to be given.

"The Cardinal left me, not much satisfied at his reception. Determined to follow, as usual, his own misguided passion, he immediately went too Trianon, disguised with a large cloak. He saw the porter, and bribed him.

"He only wished, he said, to be placed in a situation whence he might see the Duke and Duchess of the North without being seen; but no sooner did he perceive the porter engaged at some distance than he left his cloak at the lodge, and went forward in his Cardinal's dress, as

[23] *The first daughter of the Duke of Wirtemberg was the first wife of the present Emperor of Austria. She embraced the Catholic faith and died very young, two days before the Emperor Joseph the Second, at Vienna. The present Empress Dowager, late wife to Paul, became a proselyte to the Greek religion on her arrival at Petersburg. The son of the Duke of Wirtemburg, who succeeded him in the Dukedom, was a Protestant, it being his interest to profess that religion for the security of his inheritance. Prince Ferdinand, who was in the Austrian service, and a long time Governor of Vienna, was a Catholic, as he could not otherwise have enjoyed that office. He was of a very superior character to the Duke, his brother. Prince Louis, who held a commission under the Prussian Monarch, followed the religion of the country where he served, and the other Princes, who were in the employment of Sweden and other countries, found no difficulty in conforming themselves to the religion of the Sovereigns under whom they served. None of them having any established forms of worship, they naturally embraced that which conduced most to their aggrandisement, emolument, or dignity.*

if he had been one of the invited guests, placing himself purposely in the Queen's path to attract her attention as she rode by in the carriage with the Duke and Duchess.

"The Queen was shocked and thunderstruck at seeing him. But, great as was her annoyance, knowing the Cardinal had not been invited and ought not to have been there, she only discharged the porter who had been seduced to let him in; and, though the King, on being made acquainted with his treachery, would have banished His Eminence a hundred leagues from the capital, yet the Queen, the royal aunts, the Princesse Elizabeth, and myself, not to make the affair public, and thereby disgrace the high order of his ecclesiastical dignity, prevented the King from exercising his authority by commanding instant exile.

"Indeed, the Queen could never get the better of her fears of being some day, or in some way or other, betrayed by the Cardinal, for having made him the confidant of the mortification she would have suffered if the projected marriage of Louis XV. and her sister had been solemnized. On this account she uniformly opposed whatever harshness the King at any time intended against the Cardinal.

"Thus was this wicked prelate left at leisure to premeditate the horrid plot of the famous necklace, the ever memorable fraud, which so fatally verified the presentiments of the Queen."

Section 2

[The production of 'Le Mariage de Figaro', by Beaumarchais, upon the stage at Paris, so replete with indecorous and slanderous allusions to the Royal Family, had spread the prejudices against the Queen through the whole kingdom and every rank of France, just in time to prepare all minds for the deadly blow which Her Majesty received from the infamous plot of the diamond necklace. From this year, crimes and misfortunes trod closely on each others' heels in the history of the ill-starred Queen; and one calamity only disappeared to make way for a greater.

The destruction of the papers which would have thoroughly explained the transaction has still left all its essential particulars in some degree of mystery; and the interest of the clergy, who supported one of their own body, coupled with the arts and bribes of the high houses connected with the plotting prelate, must, of course, have discoloured greatly even what was well known.

It will be recollected that before the accession of Louis XVI. the Cardinal de Rohan was disgraced in consequence of his intrigues; that all his ingenuity was afterwards unremittingly exerted to obtain renewed favour; that he once obtruded himself upon the notice of the Queen in the gardens of Trianon, and that his conduct in so doing excited the indignation it deserved, but was left unpunished owing to the entreaties of the best friends of the Queen, and her own secret horror of a man who had already caused her so much anguish.

With the histories of the fraud every one is acquainted. That of Madame Campan, as far as it goes, is sufficiently detailed and correct to spare me the necessity of expatiating upon this theme of villany. Yet, to assist the reader's memory, before returning to the Journal of the Princesse de Lamballe, I shall recapitulate the leading particulars.

The Cardinal had become connected with a young, but artful and necessitous, woman, of the name of Lamotte. It was known that the darling ambition of the Cardinal was to regain the favour of the Queen.

The necklace, which has been already spoken of, and which was originally destined by Louis XV. for Marie Antoinette—had her hand, by divorce, been transferred to him—but which, though afterwards intended by Louis XV. for his mistress, Du Barry, never came to her in consequence of his death—this fatal necklace was still in existence, and in the possession of the crown jewellers, Boehmer and Bassange. It was valued at eighteen hundred thousand livres. The jewellers had often pressed it upon the Queen, and even the King himself had enforced its acceptance. But the Queen dreaded the expense, especially at an epoch of pecuniary difficulty in the State, much more than she coveted the jewels, and uniformly and resolutely declined them, although they had been proposed to her on very easy terms of payment, as she really did not like ornaments.

It was made to appear at the parliamentary investigation that the artful Lamotte had impelled the Cardinal to believe that she herself was in communication with the Queen; that she had interested Her Majesty in favour of the long slighted Cardinal; that she had fabricated a correspondence, in which professions of penitence on the part of De Rohan were answered by assurances of forgiveness from the Queen. The result of this correspondence was represented to be the engagement of the Cardinal to negotiate the purchase of the necklace secretly, by a contract for periodical payments. To the forgery of papers was added, it was

declared, the substitution of the Queen's person, by dressing up a girl of the Palais Royal to represent Her Majesty, whom she in some degree resembled, in a secret and rapid interview with Rohan in a dark grove of the gardens of Versailles, where she was to give the Cardinal a rose, in token of her royal approbation, and then hastily disappear. The importunity of the jewellers, on the failure of the stipulated payment, disclosed the plot. A direct appeal of theirs to the Queen, to save them from ruin, was the immediate source of detection. The Cardinal was arrested, and all the parties tried. But the Cardinal was acquitted, and Lamotte and a subordinate agent alone punished. The quack Cagliostro was also in the plot, but he, too, escaped, like his confederate, the Cardinal, who was made to appear as the dupe of Lamotte.

The Queen never got over the effect of this affair. Her friends well knew the danger of severe measures towards one capable of collecting around him strong support against a power already so much weakened by faction and discord. But the indignation of conscious innocence insulted, prevailed, though to its ruin!

But it is time to let the Princesse de Lamballe give her own impressions upon this fatal subject, and in her own words.]

"How could Messieurs Boehmer and Bassange presume that the Queen would have employed any third person to obtain an article of such value, without enabling them to produce an unequivocal document signed by her own hand and countersigned by mine, as had ever been the rule during my superintendence of the household, whenever anything was ordered from the jewellers by Her Majesty? Why did not Messieurs Boehmer and Bassange wait on me, when they saw a document unauthorised by me, and so widely departing from the established forms? I must still think, as I have often said to the King, that Boehmer and Bassange wished to get rid of this dead weight of diamonds in any way; and the Queen having unfortunately been led by me to hush up many foul libels against her reputation, as I then thought it prudent she should do, rather than compromise her character with wretches capable of doing anything to injure her, these jewellers, judging from this erroneous policy of the past, imagined that in this instance, also, rather than hazard exposure, Her Majesty would pay them for the necklace. This was a compromise which I myself resisted, though so decidedly adverse to bringing the affair before the nation by a public trial. Of such an explosion, I foresaw the consequences, and I ardently entreated the King and Queen to take other measures. But, though till now so hostile to severity with the Cardinal, the Queen felt herself so insulted by the proceeding that she gave up every other consideration to make manifest her innocence.

"The wary Comte de Vergennes did all he could to prevent the affair from getting before the public. Against the opinion of the King and the whole council of Ministers, he opposed judicial proceedings. Not that he conceived the Cardinal altogether guiltless; but he foresaw the fatal consequences that must result to Her Majesty, from bringing to trial an ecclesiastic of such rank; for he well knew that the host of the higher orders of the nobility, to whom the prelate was allied, would naturally strain every point to blacken the character of the King and Queen, as the only means of exonerating their kinsman in the eyes of the world from the criminal mystery attached to that most diabolical intrigue against the fair fame of Marie Antoinette. The Count could not bear the idea of the Queen's name being coupled with those of the vile wretches, Lamotte and the mountebank Cagliostro, and therefore wished the King to chastise the Cardinal by a partial exile, which might have been removed at pleasure. But the Queen's party too fatally seconded her feelings, and prevailed.

"I sat by Her Majesty's bedside the whole of the night, after I heard what had been determined against the Cardinal by the council of Ministers, to beg her to use all her interest with the King to persuade him to revoke the order of the warrant for the prelate's arrest. To

this the Queen replied, ‘Then the King, the Ministers, and the people, will all deem me guilty.’

“Her Majesty’s remark stopped all farther argument upon the subject, and I had the inconsolable grief to see my royal mistress rushing upon dangers which I had no power of preventing her from bringing upon herself.

“The slanderers who had imputed such unbounded influence to the Queen over the mind of Louis XVI. should have been consistent enough to consider that, with but a twentieth part of the tithe of her imputed power, uncontrolled as she then was by national authority, she might, without any exposure to third persons, have at once sent one of her pages to the garde-meuble and other royal depositaries, replete with hidden treasures of precious stones which never saw the light, and thence have supplied herself with more than enough to form ten necklaces, or to have fully satisfied, in any way she liked, the most unbounded passion for diamonds, for the use of which she would never have been called to account.

“But the truth is, the Queen had no love of ornaments. A proof occurred very soon after I had the honour to be nominated Her Majesty’s superintendent. On the day of the great fete of the Cordon Bleu, when it was the etiquette to wear diamonds and pearls, the Queen had omitted putting them on. As there had been a greater affluence of visitors than usual that morning, and Her Majesty’s toilet was overthronged by Princes and Princesses, I fancied in the bustle that the omission proceeded from forgetfulness. Consequently, I sent the tirewoman, in the Queen’s hearing, to order the jewels to be brought in. Smilingly, Her Majesty replied, ‘No, no! I have not forgotten these gaudy things; but I do not intend that the lustre of my eyes should be outshone by the one, or the whiteness of my teeth by the other; however, as you wish art to eclipse nature, I’ll wear them to satisfy you, ma belle dame!’

“The King was always so thoroughly indulgent to Her Majesty, with regard both to her public and private conduct, that she never had any pretext for those reserves which sometimes tempt Queens as well as the wives of private individuals to commit themselves to third persons for articles of high value, which their caprice indiscreetly impels them to procure unknown to their natural guardians. Marie Antoinette had no reproach or censure for plunging into excesses beyond her means to apprehend from her royal husband. On the contrary, the King himself had spontaneously offered to purchase the necklace from the jewellers, who had urged it on him without limiting any time for payment. It was the intention of His Majesty to have liquidated it out of his private purse. But Marie Antoinette declined the gift. Twice in my presence was the refusal repeated before Messieurs Boehmer and Bassange. Who, then, can for a moment presume, after all these circumstances, that the Queen of France, with a nation’s wealth at her feet and thousands of individuals offering her millions, which she never accepted, would have so far degraded herself and the honour of the nation, of which she was born to be the ornament, as to place herself gratuitously in the power of a knot of wretches, headed by a man whose general bad character for years had excluded him from Court and every respectable society, and had made the Queen herself mark him as an object of the utmost aversion.

“If these circumstances be not sufficient adequately to open the eyes of those whom prejudice has blinded, and whose ears have been deafened against truth, by the clamours of sinister conspirators against the monarchy instead of the monarchs; if all these circumstances, I repeat, do not completely acquit the Queen, argument, or even ocular demonstration itself, would be thrown away. Posterity will judge impartially, and with impartial judges the integrity of Marie Antoinette needs no defender.

"When the natural tendency of the character of De Rohan to romantic and extraordinary intrigue is considered in connection with the associates he had gathered around him, the plot of the necklace ceases to be a source of wonder. At the time the Cardinal was most at a loss for means to meet the necessities of his extravagance, and to obtain some means of access to the Queen, the mountebank quack, Cagliostro, made his appearance in France. His fame had soon flown from Strasburg to Paris, the magnet of vices and the seat of criminals. The Prince-Cardinal, known of old as a seeker after everything of notoriety, soon became the intimate of one who flattered him with the accomplishment of all his dreams in the realization of the philosopher's stone; converting puffs and French paste into brilliants; Roman pearls into Oriental ones; and turning earth to gold. The Cardinal, always in want of means to supply the insatiable exigencies of his ungovernable vices, had been the dupe through life of his own credulity—a drowning man catching at a straw! But instead of making gold of base materials, Cagliostro's brass soon relieved his blind adherent of all his sterling metal. As many needy persons enlisted under the banners of this nostrum speculator, it is not to be wondered at that the infamous name of the Comtesse de Lamotte, and others of the same stamp, should have thus fallen into an association of the Prince-Cardinal or that her libellous stories of the Queen of France should have found eager promulgators, where the real diamonds of the famous necklace being taken apart were divided piecemeal among a horde of the most depraved sharpers that ever existed to make human nature blush at its own degradation![24]

"Eight or ten years had elapsed from the time Her Majesty had last seen the Cardinal to speak to him, with the exception of the casual glance as she drove by when he furtively introduced himself into the garden at the fete at Trianon, till he was brought to the King's cabinet when arrested, and interrogated, and confronted with her face to face. The Prince started when he saw her. The comparison of her features with those of the guilty wretch who had dared to personate her in the garden at Versailles completely destroyed his self-possession. Her Majesty's person was become fuller, and her face was much longer than that of the infamous D'Oliva. He could neither speak nor write an intelligible reply to the questions put to him. All he could utter, and that only in broken accents, was, 'I'll pay! I'll pay Messieurs Bassange.'

"Had he not speedily recovered himself, all the mystery in which this affair has been left, so injuriously to the Queen, might have been prevented. His papers would have declared the history of every particular, and distinctly established the extent of his crime and the thorough innocence of Marie Antoinette of any connivance at the fraud, or any knowledge of the

[24] *Cagliostro, when he came to Rome, for I know not whether there had been any previous intimacy, got acquainted with a certain Marchese Vivaldi, a Roman, whose wife had been for years the chere amie of the last Venetian Ambassador, Peter Pesaro, a noble patrician, and who has ever since his embassy at Rome been his constant companion and now resides with him in England. No men in Europe are more constant in their attachments than the Venetians. Pesaro is the sole proprietor of one of the moat beautiful and magnificent palaces on the Grand Canal at Venice, though he now lives in the outskirts of London, in a small house, not so large as one of the offices of his immense noble palace, where his agent transacts his business. The husband of Pesaro's chere amie, the Marchese Vivaldi, when Cagliostro was arrested and sent to the Castello Santo Angelo at Rome, was obliged to fly his country, and went to Venice, where he was kept secreted and maintained by the Marquis Solari, and it was only through his means and those of the Cardinal Consalvi, then known only as the musical Abbe Consalvi, from his great attachment to the immortal Cimarosa, that Vivaldi was ever allowed to return to his native country; but Consalvi, who was the friend of Vivaldi, feeling with the Marquis Solari much interested for his situation, they together contrived to convince Pius VI. that he was more to be pitied than blamed, and thus obtained his recall. I have merely given this note as a further warning to be drawn from the connections of the Cardinal de Rohan, to deter hunters after novelty from forming ties with innovators and impostors. Cagliostro was ultimately condemned, by the Roman laws under Pope Pius VI., for life, to the galleys, where he died.*
Proverbs ought to be respected; for it is said that no phrase becomes a proverb until after a century's experience of its truth. In England it is proverbial to judge of men by the company they keep. Judge of the Cardinal de Rohan from his most intimate friend, the galley-slave.

necklace. But when the Cardinal was ordered by the King's Council to be put under arrest, his self-possession returned. He was given in charge to an officer totally unacquainted with the nature of the accusation. Considering only the character of his prisoner as one of the highest dignitaries of the Church, from ignorance and inexperience, he left the Cardinal an opportunity to write a German note to his factotum, the Abbe Georgel. In this note the trusty secretary was ordered to destroy all the letters of Cagliostro, Madame de Lamotte, and the other wretched associates of the infamous conspiracy; and the traitor was scarcely in custody when every evidence of his treason had disappeared. The note to Georgel saved his master from expiating his offence at the Place de Grave.

"The consequences of the affair would have been less injurious, however, had it been managed, even as it stood, with better judgment and temper. But it was improperly entrusted to the Baron de Breteuil and the Abbe Vermond, both sworn enemies of the Cardinal. Their main object was the ruin of him they hated, and they listened only to their resentments. They never weighed the danger of publicly prosecuting an individual whose condemnation would involve the first families in France, for he was allied even to many of the Princes of the blood. They should have considered that exalted personages, naturally feeling as if any crime proved against their kinsman would be a stain upon themselves, would of course resort to every artifice to exonerate the accused. To criminate the Queen was the only and the obvious method. Few are those nearest the Crown who are not most jealous of its wearers! Look at the long civil wars of York and Lancaster, and the short reign of Richard. The downfall of Kings meets less resistance than that of their inferiors.

"Still, notwithstanding all the deplorable blunders committed in this business of De Rohan, justice was not smothered without great difficulty. His acquittal cost the families of De Rohan and De Conde more than a million of livres, distributed among all ranks of the clergy; besides immense sums sent to the Court of Rome to make it invalidate the judgment of the civil authority of France upon so high a member of the Church, and to induce it to order the Cardinal's being sent to Rome by way of screening him from the prosecution, under the plausible pretext of more rigid justice.

"Considerable sums in money and jewels were also lavished on all the female relatives of the peers of France, who were destined to sit on the trial. The Abbe Georgel bribed the press, and extravagantly paid all the literary pens in France to produce the most Jesuitical and sophisticated arguments in his patron's justification. Though these writers dared not accuse or in any way criminate the Queen, yet the respectful doubts, with which their defence of her were seasoned, did indefinitely more mischief than any direct attack, which could have been directly answered.

"The long cherished, but till now smothered, resentment of the Comtesse de Noailles, the scrupulous Madame Etiquette, burst forth on this occasion. Openly joining the Cardinal's party against her former mistress and Sovereign, she recruited and armed all in favour of her protege; for it was by her intrigues De Rohan had been nominated Ambassador to Vienna. Mesdames de Guemenee and Marsan, rival pretenders to favours of His Eminence, were equally earnest to support him against the Queen. In short, there was scarcely a family of distinction in France that, from the libels which then inundated the kingdom, did not consider the King as having infringed on their prerogatives and privileges in accusing the Cardinal.

"Shortly after the acquittal of this most artful, and, in the present instance, certainly too fortunate prelate, the Princesse de Conde came to congratulate me on the Queen's innocence, and her kinsman's liberation from the Bastille.

“Without the slightest observation, I produced to the Princess documents in proof of the immense sums she alone had expended in bribing the judges and other persons, to save her relation, the Cardinal, by criminating Her Majesty.

“The Princesse de Conde instantly fell into violent hysterics, and was carried home apparently, lifeless.

“I have often reproached myself for having given that sudden shock and poignant anguish to Her Highness, but I could not have supposed that one who came so barefacedly to impress me with the Cardinal’s innocence, could have been less firm in refuting her own guilt.

“I never mentioned the circumstance to the Queen. Had I done so, Her Highness would have been forever excluded from the Court and the royal presence. This was no time to increase the enemies of Her Majesty, and, the affair of the trial being ended, I thought it best to prevent any further breach from a discord between the Court and the house of Conde. However, from a coldness subsisting ever after between the Princess and myself, I doubt not that the Queen had her suspicions that all was not as it should be in that quarter. Indeed, though Her Majesty never confessed it, I think she herself had discovered something at that very time not altogether to the credit of the Princesse de Conde, for she ceased going, from that period, to any of the fetes given at Chantilly.

“These were but a small portion of the various instruments successfully levelled by parties, even the least suspected, to blacken and destroy the fair fame of Marie Antoinette.

“The document which so justly alarmed the Princesse de Conde, when I showed it to her came into my hands in the following manner:

“Whenever a distressed family, or any particular individual, applied to me for relief, or was otherwise recommended for charitable purposes, I generally sent my little English protegee—whose veracity, well knowing the goodness of her heart, I could rely—to ascertain whether their claims were really well grounded.[25]

“One day I received an earnest memorial from a family, desiring to make some private communications of peculiar delicacy. I sent my usual ambassadress to inquire into its import. On making her mission known, she found no difficulty in ascertaining the object of the application. It proceeded from conscientious distress of mind. A relation of this family had been the regular confessor of a convent. With the Lady Abbess of this convent and her trusty nuns, the Princesse de Conde had deposited considerable sums of money, to be bestowed in creating influence in favour of the Cardinal de Rohan. The confessor, being a man of some consideration among the clergy, was applied to, to use his influence with the needier members of the Church more immediately about him, as well as those of higher station, to whom he had access, in furthering the purposes of the Princesse de Conde. The bribes were applied as intended. But, at the near approach of death, the confessor was struck with remorse. He begged his family, without mentioning his name, to send the accounts and vouchers of the sums he had so distributed, to me, as a proof of his contrition, that I might make what use of them I should think proper. The papers were handed to my messenger, who pledged her word of honour that I would certainly adhere to the dying man’s last injunctions. She desired they might be sealed up by the family, and by them directed to me.—[To this day, I neither know the name of the convent or the confessor.]—She then hastened back to

[25] *Indeed, I never deceived the Princess on these occasions. She was so generously charitable that I should have conceived it a crime. When I could get no satisfactory information, I said I could not trace anything undeserving her charity, and left Her Highness to exercise her own discretion.*

our place of rendezvous, where I waited for her, and where she consigned the packet into my own hands.

“That part of the papers which compromised only the Princesse de Conde was shown by me to the Princess on the occasion I have mentioned. It was natural enough that she should have been shocked at the detection of having suborned the clergy and others with heavy bribes to avert the deserved fate of the Cardinal. I kept this part of the packet secret till the King’s two aunts, who had also been warm advocates in favour of the prelate, left Paris for Rome. Then, as Pius VI. had interested himself as head of the Church for the honour of one of its members, I gave them these very papers to deliver to His Holiness for his private perusal. I was desirous of enabling this truly charitable and Christian head of our sacred religion to judge how far his interference was justified by facts. I am thoroughly convinced that, had he been sooner furnished with these evidences, instead of blaming the royal proceeding, he would have urged it on, nay, would himself have been the first to advise that the foul conspiracy should be dragged into open day.

“The Comte de Vergennes told me that the King displayed the greatest impartiality throughout the whole investigation for the exculpation of the Queen, and made good his title on this, as he did on every occasion where his own unbiassed feelings and opinions were called into action, to great esteem for much higher qualities than the world has usually given him credit for.

“I have been accused of having opened the prison doors of the culprit Lamotte for her escape; but the charge is false. I interested myself, as was my duty, to shield the Queen from public reproach by having Lamotte sent to a place of penitence; but I never interfered, except to lessen her punishment, after the judicial proceedings. The diamonds, in the hands of her vile associates at Paris, procured her ample means to escape. I should have been the Queen’s greatest enemy had I been the cause of giving liberty to one who acted, and might naturally have been expected to act, as this depraved woman did.

“Through the private correspondence which was carried on between this country and England, after I had left it, I was informed that M. de Calonne, whom the Queen never liked, and who was called to the administration against her will—which he knew, and consequently became one of her secret enemies in the affair of the necklace—was discovered to have been actively employed against Her Majesty in the work published in London by Lamotte.

“Mr. Sheridan was the gentleman who first gave me this information.

“I immediately sent a trusty person by the Queen’s orders to London, to buy up the whole work. It was too late. It had been already so widely circulated that its consequences could no longer be prevented. I was lucky enough, however, for a considerable sum, to get a copy from a person intimate with the author, the margin of which, in the handwriting of M. de Calonne, actually contained numerous additional circumstances which were to have been published in a second edition! This publication my agent, aided by some English gentlemen, arrived in time to suppress.

“The copy I allude to was brought to Paris and shown to the Queen. She instantly flew with it in her hands to the King’s cabinet.

“‘Now, Sire,’ exclaimed she, ‘I hope you will be convinced that my enemies are those whom I have long considered as the most pernicious of Your Majesty’s Councillors—your own Cabinet Ministers—your M. de Calonne!—respecting whom I have often given you my opinion, which, unfortunately, has always been attributed to mere female caprice, or as having been biassed by the intrigues of Court favourites! This, I hope, Your Majesty will now be able to contradict!’

“The King all this time was looking over the different pages containing M. de Calonne’s additions on their margins. On recognising the hand-writing, His Majesty was so affected by this discovered treachery of his Minister and the agitation of his calumniated Queen that he could scarcely articulate.

“‘Where,’ said he, I did you procure this?’

“‘Through the means, Sire, of some of the worthy members of that nation your treacherous Ministers made our enemy—from England! where your unfortunate Queen, your injured wife, is compassionated!’

“‘Who got it for you?’

“‘My dearest, my real, and my only sincere friend, the Princesse de Lamballe!’

“The King requested I should be sent for. I came. As may be imagined, I was received with the warmest sentiments of affection by both Their Majesties. I then laid before the King the letter of Mr. Sheridan, which was, in substance, as follows:

“‘MADAME,

“‘A work of mine, which I did not choose should be printed, was published in Dublin and transmitted to be sold in London. As soon as I was informed of it, and had procured a spurious copy, I went to the bookseller to put a stop to its circulation. I there met with a copy of the work of Madame de Lamotte, which has been corrected by some one at Paris and sent back to the bookseller for a second edition. Though not in time to suppress the first edition, owing to its rapid circulation, I have had interest enough, through the means of the bookseller of whom I speak, to remit you the copy which has been sent as the basis of a new one. The corrections, I am told, are by one of the King’s Ministers. If true, I should imagine the writer will be easily traced.

“‘I am happy that it has been in my power to make this discovery, and I hope it will be the means of putting a stop to this most scandalous publication. I feel myself honoured in having contributed thus far to the wishes of Her Majesty, which I hope I have fulfilled to the entire satisfaction of Your Highness.

“‘Should anything further transpire on this subject, I will give you the earliest information.

“‘I remain, madame, with profound respect, Your Highness’ most devoted,

“‘very humble servant,

“‘RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.’[26]

“M. de Calonne immediately received the King’s mandate to resign the portfolio. The Minister desired that he might be allowed to give his resignation to the King himself. His request was granted. The Queen was present at the interview. The work in question was produced. On beholding it, the Minister nearly fainted. The King got up and left the room. The Queen, who remained, told M. de Calonne that His Majesty had no further occasion for his services. He fell on his knees. He was not allowed to speak, but was desired to leave Paris.

[26] *Madame Campan mentions in her work that the Queen had informed her of the treachery of the Minister, but did not enter into particulars, nor explain the mode or source of its detection. Notwithstanding the parties had bound themselves for the sums they received not to reprint the work, a second edition appeared a short time afterwards in London. This, which was again bought up by the French Ambassador, was the same which was to have been burned by the King’s command at the china manufactory at Sevres.*

"The dismissal and disgrace of M. de Calonne were scarcely known before all Paris vociferated that they were owing to the intrigues of the favourite De Polignac, in consequence of his having refused to administer to her own superfluous extravagance and the Queen's repeated demands on the Treasury to satisfy the numerous dependants of the Duchess.

"This, however, was soon officially disproved by the exhibition of a written proposition of Calonne's to the Queen, to supply an additional hundred thousand francs that year to her annual revenue, which Her Majesty refused. As for the Duchesse de Polignac, so far from having caused the disgrace, she was not even aware of the circumstance from which it arose; nor did the Minister himself ever know how, or by what agency, his falsehood was so thoroughly unmasked."

NOTE:

[The work which is here spoken of, the Queen kept, as a proof of the treachery of Calonne towards her and his Sovereign, till the storming of the Tuileries on the 10th of August, 1792, when, with the rest of the papers and property plundered on that memorable occasion, it fell into the hands of the ferocious mob.

M. de Calonne soon after left France for Italy. There he lived for some time in the palace of a particular friend of mine and the Marquis, my husband, the Countess Francese Tressino, at Vicenza.

In consequence of our going every season to take the mineral waters and use the baths at Valdagno, we had often occasion to be in company with M. de Calonne, both at Vicenza and Valdagno, where I must do him the justice to say he conducted himself with the greatest circumspection in speaking of the Revolution.

Though he evidently avoided the topic which terminates this chapter, yet one day, being closely pressed upon the subject, he said forgeries were daily committed on Ministers, and were most particularly so in France at the period in question; that he had borne the blame of various imprudencies neither authorized nor executed by him; that much had been done and supposed to have been done with his sanction, of which he had not the slightest knowledge. This he observed generally, without specifying any express instance.

He was then asked whether he did not consider himself responsible for the mischief he occasioned by declaring the nation in a state of bankruptcy. He said, "No, not in the least. There was no other way of preventing enormous sums from being daily lavished, as they then were, on herds of worthless beings; that the Queen had sought to cultivate a state of private domestic society, but that, in the attempt, she only warmed in her bosom domestic vipers, who fed on the vital spirit of her generosity." He mentioned no names.

I then took the liberty of asking him his opinion of the Princesse de Lamballe.

"Oh, madame! had the rest of Her Majesty's numerous attendants possessed the tenth part of that unfortunate Victim's virtues, Her Majesty would never have been led into the errors which all France must deplore!

"I shall never forget her," continued he, "the day I went to take leave of her. She was sitting on a sofa when I entered. On seeing me, she rose immediately. Before I could utter a syllable, 'Monsieur,' said the Princess, 'you are accused of being the Queen's enemy. Acquit yourself of the foul deed imputed to you, and I shall be happy to serve you as far as lies in my power. Till then, I must decline holding any communication with an individual thus situated. I am her friend, and cannot receive any one known to be otherwise.'

“There was something,” added he, “so sublime, so dignified, and altogether so firm, though mild in her manner, that she appeared not to belong to a race of earthly beings!”

Seeing the tears fall from his eyes, while he was thus eulogising her whose memory I shall ever venerate, I almost forgave him the mischief of his imprudence, which led to her untimely end. I therefore carefully avoided wounding his few gray hairs and latter days, and left him still untold that it was by her, of whom he thought so highly, that his uncontradicted treachery had been discovered.

Section 3

“Of the many instances in which the Queen’s exertions to serve those whom she conceived likely to benefit and relieve the nation, turned to the injury, not only of herself, but those whom she patronised and the cause she would strengthen, one of the most unpopular was that of the promotion of Brienne, Archbishop of Sens, to the Ministry. Her interest in his favour was entirely created by the Abbe Vermond, himself too superficial to pronounce upon any qualities, and especially such as were requisite for so high a station. By many, the partiality which prompted Vermond to espouse the interests of the Archbishop was ascribed to the amiable sentiment of gratitude for the recommendation of that dignitary, by which Vermond himself first obtained his situation at Court; but there were others, who have been deemed deeper in the secret, who impute it to the less honourable source of self-interest, to the mere spirit of ostentation, to the hope of its enabling him to bring about the destruction of the De Polignacs. Be this as it may, the Abbe well knew that a Minister indebted for his elevation solely to the Queen would be supported by her to the last.

“This, unluckily, proved the case. Marie Antoinette persisted in upholding every act of Brienne, till his ignorance and unpardonable blunders drew down the general indignation of the people against Her Majesty and her protege, with whom she was identified. The King had assented to the appointment with no other view than that of not being utterly isolated and to show a respect for his consort’s choice. But the incapable Minister was presently compelled to retire not only from office, but from Paris. Never was a Minister more detested while in power, or a people more enthusiastically satisfied at his going out. His effigy was burnt in every town of France, and the general illuminations and bonfires in the capital were accompanied by hooting and hissing the deposed statesman to the barriers.

“The Queen, prompted by the Abbe Vermond, even after Brienne’s dismission, gave him tokens of her royal munificence. Her Majesty feared that her acting otherwise to a Minister, who had been honoured by her confidence, would operate as a check to prevent all men of celebrity from exposing their fortunes to so ungracious a return for lending their best services to the State, which now stood in need of the most skilful pilots. Such were the motives assigned by Her Majesty herself to me, when I took the liberty, of expostulating with her respecting the dangers which threatened herself and family, from this continued devotedness to a Minister against whom the nation had pronounced so strongly. I could not but applaud the delicacy of the feeling upon which her conduct had been grounded; nor could I blame her, in my heart, for the uprightness of her principle, in showing that what she had once undertaken should not be abandoned through female caprice. I told Her Majesty that the system upon which she acted was praiseworthy; and that its application in the present instance would have been so had the Archbishop possessed as much talent as he lacked; but, that now it was quite requisite for her to stop the public clamour by renouncing her protection of a man who had so seriously endangered the public tranquillity and her own reputation.

“As a proof how far my caution was well founded, there was an immense riotous mob raised about this time against the Queen, in consequence of her having, appointed the dismissed Minister’s niece, Madame de Canisy, to a place at Court, and having given her picture, set in diamonds, to the Archbishop himself.

“The Queen, in many cases, was by far too communicative to some of her household, who immediately divulged all they gathered from her unreserve. How could these circumstances

have transpired to the people but from those nearest the person of Her Majesty, who, knowing the public feeling better than their royal mistress could be supposed to know it, did their own feeling little credit by the mischievous exposure? The people were exasperated beyond all conception. The Abbe Vermond placed before Her Majesty the consequences of her communicativeness, and from this time forward she never repeated the error. After the lesson she had received, none of her female attendants, not even the Duchesse de Polignac, to whom she would have confided her very existence, could, had they been ever so much disposed, have drawn anything upon public matters from her. With me, as her superintendent and entitled by my situation to interrogate and give her counsel, she was not, of course, under the same restriction. To his other representations of the consequences of the Queen's indiscreet openness, the Abbe Vermond added that, being obliged to write all the letters, private and public, he often found himself greatly embarrassed by affairs having gone forth to the world beforehand. One misfortune of putting this seal upon the lips of Her Majesty was that it placed her more thoroughly in the Abbe's power. She was, of course, obliged to rely implicitly upon him concerning many points, which, had they undergone the discussion necessarily resulting from free conversation, would have been shown to her under very different aspects. A man with a better heart, less Jesuitical, and not so much interested as Vermond was to keep his place, would have been a safer monitor.

"Though the Archbishop of Sens was so much hated and despised, much may be said in apology for his disasters. His unpopularity, and the Queen's support of him against the people, was certainly a vital blow to the monarchy. There is no doubt of his having been a poor substitute for the great men who had so gloriously beaten the political paths of administration, particularly the Comte de Vergennes and Necker. But at that time, when France was threatened by its great convulsion, where is the genius which might not have committed itself? And here is a man coming to rule amidst revolutionary feelings, with no knowledge whatever of revolutionary principles—a pilot steering into one harbour by the chart of another. I am by no means a vindicator of the Archbishop's obstinacy in offering himself a candidate for a situation entirely foreign to the occupations, habits, and studies of his whole life; but his intentions may have been good enough, and we must not charge the physician with murder who has only mistaken the disease, and, though wrong in his judgment, has been zealous and conscientious; nor must we blame the comedians for the faults of the comedy. The errors were not so much in the men who did not succeed as in the manners of the times.

"The part which the Queen was now openly compelled to bear, in the management of public affairs, increased the public feeling against her from dislike to hatred. Her Majesty was unhappy, not only from the necessity which called her out of the sphere to which she thought her sex ought to be confined, but from the divisions which existed in the Royal Family upon points in which their common safety required a common scheme of action. Her favourite brother-in-law, D'Artois, had espoused the side of D'ORLEANS, and the popular party seemed to prevail against her, even with the King.

"The various parliamentary assemblies, which had swept on their course, under various denominations, in rapid and stormy succession, were now followed by one which, like Aaron's rod, was to swallow up the rest. Its approach was regarded by the Queen with ominous reluctance. At length, however, the moment for the meeting of the States General at Versailles arrived. Necker was once more in favour, and a sort of forlorn hope of better times dawned upon the perplexed monarch, in his anticipations from this assembly.

"The night before the procession of the instalment of the States General was to take place, it being my duty to attend Her Majesty, I received an anonymous letter, cautioning me not to be

seen that day by her side. I immediately went to the King's apartments and showed him the letter. His Majesty humanely enjoined me to abide by its counsels. I told him I hoped he would for once permit me to exercise my own discretion; for if my royal Sovereign were in danger, it was then that her attendants should be most eager to rally round her, in order to watch over her safety and encourage her fortitude.

"While we were thus occupied, the Queen and my sister-in-law, the Duchesse d'Orleans, entered the King's apartment, to settle some part of the etiquette respecting the procession.

"'I wish,' exclaimed the Duchess, 'that this procession were over; or that it were never to take place; or that none of us had to be there; or else, being obliged, that we had all passed, and were comfortably at home again.'

"'Its taking place,' answered the Queen, 'never had my sanction, especially at Versailles. M. Necker appears to be in its favour, and answers for its success. I wish he may not be deceived; but I much fear that he is guided more by the mistaken hope of maintaining his own popularity by this impolitic meeting, than by any conscientious confidence in its advantage to the King's authority.'

"The King, having in his hand the letter which I had just brought him, presented it to the Queen.

"'This, my dear Duchess,' cried the Queen, I comes from the Palais Royal manufactory, [Palais d' Orleans. D.W.] to poison the very first sentiments of delight at the union expected between the King and his subjects, by innuendoes of the danger which must result from my being present at it. Look at the insidiousness of the thing! Under a pretext of kindness, cautions against the effect of their attachment are given to my most sincere and affectionate attendants, whose fidelity none dare attack openly. I am, however, rejoiced that Lamballe has been cautioned.'

"'Against what?' replied I.

"'Against appearing in the procession,' answered the Queen.

"'It is only,' I exclaimed, 'by putting me in the grave they can ever withdraw me from Your Majesty. While I have life and Your Majesty's sanction, force only will prevent me from doing my duty. Fifty thousand daggers, Madame, were they all raised against me, would have no power to shake the firmness of my character or the earnestness of my attachment. I pity the wretches who have so little penetration. Victim or no victim, nothing shall ever induce me to quit Your Majesty.'

"The Queen and Duchess, both in tears, embraced me. After the Duchess had taken her leave, the King and Queen hinted their suspicions that she had been apprised of the letter, and had made this visit expressly to observe what effect it had produced, well knowing at the time that some attempt was meditated by the hired mob and purchased deputies already brought over to the D'ORLEANS faction. Not that the slightest suspicion of collusion could ever be attached to the good Duchesse d'Orleans against the Queen. The intentions of the Duchess were known to be as virtuous and pure as those of her husband's party were criminal and mischievous. But, no doubt, she had intimations of the result intended; and, unable to avert the storm or prevent its cause, had been instigated by her strong attachment to me, as well as the paternal affection her father, the Duc de Penthievre, bore me, to attempt to lessen the exasperation of the Palais Royal party and the Duke, her husband, against me, by dissuading me from running any risk upon the occasion.

"The next day, May 5, 1789, at the very moment when all the resources of nature and art seemed exhausted to render the Queen a paragon of loveliness beyond anything I had ever

before witnessed, even in her; when every impartial eye was eager to behold and feast on that form whose beauty warmed every heart in her favour; at that moment a horde of miscreants, just as she came within sight of the Assembly, thundered in her ears, 'Orleans forever!' three or four times, while she and the King were left to pass unheeded. Even the warning of the letter, from which she had reason to expect some commotions, suggested to her imagination nothing like this, and she was dreadfully shaken. I sprang forward to support her. The King's party, prepared for the attack, shouted 'Vive le roi! Vive la reine!' As I turned, I saw some of the members lividly pale, as if fearing their machinations had been discovered; but, as they passed, they said in the hearing of Her Majesty, 'Remember, you are the daughter of Maria Theresa.'—'True,' answered the Queen. The Duc de Biron, Orleans, La Fayette, Mirabeau, and the Mayor of Paris, seeing Her Majesty's emotion, came up, and were going to stop the procession. All, in apparent agitation, cried out 'Halt!' The Queen, sternly looking at them, made a sign with her head to proceed, recovered herself, and moved forward in the train, with all the dignity and self-possession for which she was so eminently distinguished.

"But this self-command in public proved nearly fatal to Her Majesty on her return to her apartment. There her real feelings broke forth, and their violence was so great as to cause the bracelets on her wrists and the pearls in her necklace to burst from the threads and settings, before her women and the ladies in attendance could have time to take them off. She remained many hours in a most alarming state of strong convulsions. Her clothes were obliged to be cut from her body, to give her ease; but as soon as she was undressed, and tears came to her relief, she flew alternately to the Princesse Elizabeth and to myself; but we were both too much overwhelmed to give her the consolation of which she stood so much in need.

"Barnave that very evening came to my private apartment, and tendered his services to the Queen. He told me he wished Her Majesty to be convinced that he was a Frenchman; that he only desired his country might be governed by salutary laws, and not by the caprice of weak sovereigns, or a vitiated, corrupt Ministry; that the clergy and nobility ought to contribute to the wants of the State equally with every other class of the King's subjects; that when this was accomplished, and abuses were removed, by such a national representation as would enable the Minister, Necker, to accomplish his plans for the liquidation of the national debt, I might assure Her Majesty that both the King and herself would find themselves happier in a constitutional government than they had ever yet been; for such a government would set them free from all dependence on the caprice of Ministers, and lessen a responsibility of which they now experienced the misery; that if the King sincerely entered into the spirit of regenerating the French nation, he would find among the present representatives many members of probity, loyal and honourable in their intentions, who would never become the destroyers of a limited legitimate monarchy, or the corrupt regicides of a rump Parliament, such as brought the wayward Charles the First, of England, to the fatal block.

"I attempted to relate the conversation to the Queen. She listened with the greatest attention till I came to the part concerning the constitutional King, when Her Majesty lost her patience, and prevented me from proceeding.[27]

[27] *This and other conversations, which will be found in subsequent pages, will prove that Barnave's sentiments in favour of the Royal Family long preceded the affair at Varennes, the beginning of which Madame Campan assigns to it. Indeed it must by this time be evident to the reader that Madame Campan, though very correct in relating all she knew, with respect to the history of Marie Antoinette, was not in possession of matters foreign to her occupation about the person of the Queen, and, in particular, that she could communicate little concerning those important intrigues carried on respecting the different deputies of the first Assembly, till in the latter days of the Revolution, when it became necessary, from the pressure of events, that she should be made a sort of confidante, in order to prevent her from compromising the persons of the Queen and the Princesse de Lamballe: a trust, of her claim to which her undoubted fidelity was an ample pledge. Still, however, she was often absent*

“The expense of the insulting scene, which had so overcome Her Majesty, was five hundred thousand francs! This sum was paid by the agents of the Palais Royal, and its execution entrusted principally to Mirabeau, Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, and another individual, who was afterwards brought over to the Court party.

“The history of the Assembly itself on the day following, the 6th of May, is too well known. The sudden perturbation of a guilty conscience, which overcame the Duc d’Orleans, seemed like an awful warning. He had scarcely commenced his inflammatory address to the Assembly, when some one, who felt incommoded by the stifling heat of the hall, exclaimed, ‘Throw open the windows!’ The conspirator fancied he heard in this his death sentence. He fainted, and was conducted home in the greatest agitation. Madame de Bouffon was at the Palais Royal when the Duke was taken thither. The Duchesse d’Orleans was at the palace of the Duc de Penthievre, her father, while the Duke himself was at the Hotel Thoulouse with me, where he was to dine, and where we were waiting for the Duchess to come and join us, by appointment. But Madame de Bouffon was so alarmed by the state in which she saw the Duc d’Orleans that she instantly left the Palais Royal, and despatched his valet express to bring her thither. My sister-in-law sent an excuse to me for not coming to dinner, and an explanation to her father for so abruptly leaving his palace, and hastened home to her husband. It was some days before he recovered; and his father-in-law, his wife, and myself were not without hopes that he would see in this an omen to prevent him from persisting any longer in his opposition to the Royal Family.

“The effects of the recall of the popular Minister, Necker, did not satisfy the King. Necker soon became an object of suspicion to the Court party, and especially to His Majesty and the Queen. He was known to have maintained an understanding with D’ORLEANS. The miscarriage of many plans and the misfortunes which succeeded were the result of this connection, though it was openly disavowed. The first suspicion of the coalition arose thus:

“When the Duke had his bust carried about Paris, after his unworthy schemes against the King had been discovered, it was thrown into the mire. Necker passing, perhaps by mere accident, stopped his carriage, and expressing himself with some resentment for such treatment to a Prince of the blood and a friend of the people, ordered the bust to be taken to the Palais Royal, where it was washed, crowned with laurel, and thence, with Necker’s own bust, carried to Versailles. The King’s aunts, coming from Bellevue as the procession was upon the road, ordered the guards to send the men away who bore the busts, that the King and Queen might not be insulted with the sight. This circumstance caused another riot, which was attributed to Their Majesties. The dismission of the Minister was the obvious result. It is certain, however, that, in obeying the mandate of exile, Necker had no wish to exercise the advantage he possessed from his great popularity. His retirement was sudden and secret; and, although it was mentioned that very evening by the Baroness de Stael to the Comte de Chinon, so little bustle was made about his withdrawing from France, that it was even stated at the time to have been utterly unknown, even to his daughter.

“Necker himself ascribed his dismission to the influence of the De Polignacs; but he was totally mistaken, for the Duchesse de Polignac was the last person to have had any influence in matters of State, whatever might have been the case with those who surrounded her. She was devoid of ambition or capacity to give her weight; and the Queen was not so pliant in points of high import as to allow herself to be governed or overruled, unless her mind was thoroughly convinced. In that respect, she was something like Catharine II., who always

from Court at moments of great importance, and was obliged to take her information, upon much which she has recorded, from hearsay, which has led her, as I have before stated, into frequent mistakes.

distinguished her favourites from her Minister; but in the present case she had no choice, and was under the necessity of yielding to the boisterous voice of a faction.

“From this epoch, I saw all the persons who had any wish to communicate with the Queen on matters relative to the public business, and Her Majesty was generally present when they came, and received them in my apartments. The Duchesse de Polignac never, to my knowledge, entered into any of these State questions; yet there was no promotion in the civil, military, or ministerial department, which she has not been charged with having influenced the Queen to make, though there were few of them who were not nominated by the King and his Ministers, even unknown to the Queen herself.

“The prevailing dissatisfaction against Her Majesty and the favourite De Polignac now began to take so many forms, and produce effects so dreadful, as to wring her own feelings, as well as those of her royal mistress, with the most intense anguish. Let me mention one gross and barbarous instance in proof of what I say.

“After the birth of the Queen’s second son, the Duc de Normandie, who was afterwards Dauphin, the Duke and Duchess of Harcourt, outrageously jealous of the ascendency of the governess of the Dauphin, excited the young Prince’s hatred toward Madame de Polignac to such a pitch that he would take nothing from her hands, but often, young as he was at the time, order her out of the apartment, and treat her remonstrances with the utmost contempt. The Duchess bitterly complained of the Harcourts to the Queen; for she really sacrificed the whole of her time to the care and attention required by this young Prince, and she did so from sincere attachment, and that he might not be irritated in his declining state of health. The Queen was deeply hurt at these dissensions between the governor and governess. Her Majesty endeavoured to pacify the mind of the young Prince, by literally making herself a slave to his childish caprices, which in all probability would have created the confidence so desired, when a most cruel, unnatural, I may say diabolical, report prevailed to alienate the child’s affections even from his mother, in making him believe that, owing to his deformity and growing ugliness, she had transferred all her tenderness to his younger brother, who certainly was very superior in health and beauty to the puny Dauphin. Making a pretext of this calumny, the governor of the heir-apparent was malicious enough to prohibit him from eating or drinking anything but what first passed through the hands of his physicians; and so strong was the impression made by this interdict on the mind of the young Dauphin that he never after saw the Queen but with the greatest terror. The feelings of his disconsolate parent may be more readily conceived than described. So may the mortification of his governess, the Duchesse de Polignac, herself so tender, so affectionate a mother. Fortunately for himself, and happily for his wretched parents, this royal youth, whose life, though short, had been so full of suffering, died at Versailles on the 4th of June, 1789, and, though only between seven and eight years of age at the time of his decease, he had given proofs of intellectual precocity, which would probably have made continued life, amidst the scenes of wretchedness, which succeeded, anything to him but a blessing.

“The cabals of the Duke of Harcourt, to which I have just adverted, against the Duchesse de Polignac, were the mere result of foul malice and ambition. Harcourt wished to get his wife, who was the sworn enemy of De Polignac, created governess to the Dauphin, instead of the Queen’s favourite. Most of the criminal stories against the Duchesse de Polignac, and which did equal injury to the Queen, were fabricated by the Harcourts, for the purpose of excluding their rival from her situation.

“Barnave, meanwhile, continued faithful to his liberal principles, but equally faithful to his desire of bringing Their Majesties over to those principles, and making them republican Sovereigns. He lost no opportunity of availing himself of my permission for him to call

whenever he chose on public business; and he continued to urge the same points, upon which he had before been so much in earnest, although with no better effect. Both the King and the Queen looked with suspicion upon Barnave, and with still more suspicion upon his politics.

“The next time I received him, ‘Madame,’ exclaimed the deputy to me, ‘since our last interview I have pondered well on the situation of the King; and, as an honest Frenchman, attached to my lawful Sovereign, and anxious for his future prosperous reign, I am decidedly of opinion that his own safety, as well as the dignity of the crown of France, and the happiness of his subjects, can only be secured by his giving his country a Constitution, which will at once place his establishment beyond the caprice and the tyranny of corrupt administrations, and secure hereafter the first monarchy in Europe from the possibility of sinking under weak Princes, by whom the royal splendour of France has too often been debased into the mere tool of vicious and mercenary noblesse, and sycophantic courtiers. A King, protected by a Constitution, can do no wrong. He is unshackled with responsibility. He is empowered with the comfort of exercising the executive authority for the benefit of the nation, while all the harsher duties, and all the censures they create, devolve on others. It is, therefore, madame, through your means, and the well-known friendship you have ever evinced for the Royal Family, and the general welfare of the French nation, that I wish to obtain a private audience of Her Majesty, the Queen, in order to induce her to exert the never-failing ascendency she has ever possessed over the mind of our good King, in persuading him to the sacrifice of a small proportion of his power, for the sake of preserving the monarchy to his heirs; and posterity will record the virtues of a Prince who has been magnanimous enough, of his own free will, to resign the unlawful part of his prerogatives, usurped by his predecessors, for the blessing and pleasure of giving liberty to a beloved people, among whom both the King and Queen will find many Hampdens and Sidneys, but very few Cromwells. Besides, madame, we must make a merit of necessity. The times are pregnant with events, and it is more prudent to support the palladium of the ancient monarchy than risk its total overthrow; and fall it must, if the diseased excrescences, of which the people complain, and which threaten to carry death into the very heart of the tree, be not lopped away in time by the Sovereign himself.’

“I heard the deputy with the greatest attention. I promised to fulfil his commission. The better to execute my task, I retired the moment he left me, and wrote down all I could recollect of his discourse, that it might be thoroughly placed before the Queen the first opportunity.

“When I communicated the conversation to Her Majesty, she listened with the most gracious condescension, till I came to the part wherein Barnave so forcibly impressed the necessity of adopting a constitutional monarchy. Here, as she had done once before, when I repeated some former observations of Barnave to her, Marie Antoinette somewhat lost her equanimity. She rose from her seat, and exclaimed:

“‘What! is an absolute Prince, and the hereditary Sovereign of the ancient monarchy of France, to become the tool of a plebeian faction, who will, their point once gained, dethrone him for his imbecile complaisance? Do they wish to imitate the English Revolution of 1648, and reproduce the sanguinary times of the unfortunate and weak Charles the First? To make France a commonwealth! Well! be it so! But before I advise the King to such a step, or give my consent to it, they shall bury me under the ruins of the monarchy.’

“‘But what answer,’ said I, ‘does Your Majesty wish me to return to the deputy’s request for a private audience?’

“‘What answer?’ exclaimed the Queen. No answer at all is the best answer to such a presumptuous proposition! I tremble for the consequences of the impression their disloyal

manoeuvres have made upon the minds of the people, and I have no faith whatever in their proffered services to the King. However, on reflection, it may be expedient to temporise. Continue to see him. Learn, if possible, how far he may be trusted; but do not fix any time, as yet, for the desired audience. I wish to apprise the King, first, of his interview with you, Princess. This conversation does not agree with what he and Mirabeau proposed about the King's recovering his prerogatives. Are these the prerogatives with which he flattered the King? Binding him hand and foot, and excluding him from every privilege, and then casting him a helpless dependant on the caprice of a volatile plebeian faction! The French nation is very different from the English. The first rules of the established ancient order of the government broken through, they will violate twenty others, and the King will be sacrificed, before this frivolous people again organise themselves with any sort of regular government.'

"Agreeably to Her Majesty's commands, I continued to see Barnave. I communicated with him by letter,' at his private lodgings at Passy, and at Vitry; but it was long before the Queen could be brought to consent to the audience he solicited.[28]

"Indeed, Her Majesty had such an aversion to all who had declared themselves for any innovation upon the existing power of the monarchy, that she was very reluctant to give audience upon the subject to any person, not even excepting the Princes of the blood. The Comte d'Artois himself, leaning as he did to the popular side, had ceased to be welcome. Expressions he had made use of, concerning the necessity for some change, had occasioned the coolness, which was already of considerable standing.

[28] *Of these letters I was generally the bearer. I recollect that day perfectly. I was copying some letters for the Princesse de Lamballe, when the Prince de Conti came in. The Prince lived not only to see, but to feel the errors of his system. He attained a great age. He outlived the glory of his country. Like many others, the first gleam of political regeneration led him into a system, which drove him out of France, to implore the shelter of a foreign asylum, that he might not fall a victim to his own credulity. I had an opportunity of witnessing in his latter days his sincere repentance; and to this it is fit that I should bear testimony. There were no bounds to the execration with which he expressed himself towards the murderers of those victims, whose death he lamented with a bitterness in which some remorse was mingled, from the impression that his own early errors in favour of the Revolution had unintentionally accelerated their untimely end. This was a source to him of deep and perpetual self-reproach.*

There was an eccentricity in the appearance, dress, and manners of the Prince de Conti, which well deserves recording.

He wore to the very last—and it was in Barcelona, so late as 1803, that I last had the honour of conversing with him—a white rich stuff dress frock coat, of the cut and fashion of Louis XIV., which, being without any collar, had buttons and button-holes from the neck to the bottom of the skirt, and was padded and stiffened with buckram. The cuffs were very large, of a different colour, and turned up to the elbows. The whole was lined with white satin, which, from its being very much moth-eaten, appeared as if it had been dotted on purpose to show the buckram between the satin lining. His waistcoat was of rich green striped silk, bound with gold lace; the buttons and buttonholes of gold; the flaps very large, and completely covering his small clothes; which happened very apropos, for they scarcely reached his knees, over which he wore large striped silk stockings, that came half-way up his thighs. His shoes had high heels, and reached half up his legs; the buckles were small, and set round with paste. A very narrow stiff stock decorated his neck. He carried a hat, with a white feather on the inside, under his arm. His ruffles were of very handsome point lace. His few gray hairs were gathered in a little round bag. The wig alone was wanting to make him a thorough picture of the polished age of the founder of Versailles and Marly.

He had all that princely politeness of manner which so eminently distinguished the old school of French nobility, previous to the Revolution. He was the thorough gentleman, a character by no means so readily to be met with in these days of refinement as one would imagine. He never addressed the softer sex but with ease and elegance, and admiration of their persons.

Could Louis XIV. have believed, had it been told to him when he placed this branch of the Bourbons on the throne of Iberia, that it would one day refuse to give shelter at the Court of Madrid to one of his family, for fear of offending a Corsican usurper!

“One day the Prince de Conti came to me, to complain of the Queen’s refusing to receive him, because he had expressed himself to the same effect as had the Comte d’Artois on the subject of the Tiers Etat.

“‘And does Your Highness,’ replied I, ‘imagine that the Queen is less displeased with the conduct of the Comte d’Artois on that head than she is with you, Prince? I can assure Your Highness, that at this moment there subsists a very great degree of coolness between Her Majesty and her royal brother-in-law, whom she loves as if he were her own brother. Though she makes every allowance for his political inexperience, and well knows the goodness of his heart and the rectitude of his intentions, yet policy will not permit her to change her sentiments.’

“‘That may be,’ said the Prince, ‘but while Her Majesty continues to honour with her royal presence the Duchesse de Polignac, whose friends, as well as herself, are all enthusiastically mad in favour of the constitutional system, she shows an undue partiality, by countenancing one branch of the party and not the other; particularly so, as the great and notorious leader of the opposition, which the Queen frowns upon, is the sister-in-law of this very Duchesse de Polignac, and the avowed favourite of the Comte d’Artois, by whom, and the councils of the Palais Royal, he is supposed to be totally governed in his political career.’

“‘The Queen,’ replied I, ‘is certainly her own mistress. She sees, I believe, many persons more from habit than any other motive; to which, Your Highness is aware, many Princes often make sacrifices. Your Highness cannot suppose I can have the temerity to control Her Majesty, in the selection of her friends, or in her sentiments respecting them.’

“‘No,’ exclaimed the Prince, ‘I imagine not. But she might just as well see any of us; for we are no more enemies of the Crown than the party she is cherishing by constantly appearing among them; which, according to her avowed maxims concerning the not sanctioning any but supporters of the absolute monarchy, is in direct opposition to her own sentiments.

“‘Who,’ continued His Highness, ‘caused that infernal comedy, ‘Le Mariage de Figaro’, to be brought out, but the party of the Duchesse de Polignac?[29]

The play is a critique on the whole Royal Family, from the drawing up of the curtain to its fall. It burlesques the ways and manners of every individual connected with the Court of Versailles. Not a scene but touches some of their characters. Are not the Queen herself and the Comte d’Artois lampooned and caricatured in the garden scenes, and the most slanderous ridicule cast upon their innocent evening walks on the terrace? Does not Beaumarchais plainly show in it, to every impartial eye, the means which the Comtesse Diane has taken publicly to demonstrate her jealousy of the Queen’s ascendency over the Comte d’Artois? Is it not from the same sentiment that she roused the jealousy of the Comtesse d’Artois against Her Majesty?’

“‘All these circumstances,’ observed I, ‘the King prudently foresaw when he read the manuscript, and caused it to be read to the Queen, to convince her of the nature of its characters and the dangerous tendency likely to arise from its performance. Of this Your Highness is aware. It is not for me to apprise you that, to avert the excitement inevitable from

[29] *Note of the Princesse de Lamballe:—The Prince de Conti never could speak of Beaumarchais but with the greatest contempt. There was something personal in this exasperation. Beaumarchais had satirized the Prince. ‘The Spanish Barber’ was founded on a circumstance which happened at a country house between Conti and a young lady, during the reign of Louis XV., when intrigues of every kind were practised and almost sanctioned. The poet has exposed the Prince by making him the Doctor Bartolo of his play. The affair which supplied the story was hushed up at Court, and the Prince was punished only by the loss of his mistress, who became the wife of another.*

its being brought upon the stage, and under a thorough conviction of the mischief it would produce in turning the minds of the people against the Queen, His Majesty solemnly declared that the comedy should not be performed in Paris; and that he would never sanction its being brought before the public on any stage in France.'

"'Bah! bah! madame!' exclaimed De Conti. The Queen has acted like a child in this affair, as in many others. In defiance of His Majesty's determination, did not the Queen herself, through the fatal influence of her favourite, whose party wearied her out by continued importunities, cause the King to revoke his express mandate? And what has been the consequence of Her Majesty's ungovernable partiality for these De Polignacs?'

"'You know, Prince,' said I, 'better than I do.'

"'The proofs of its bad consequences,' pursued His Highness, 'are more strongly verified than ever by your own withdrawing from the Queen's parties since her unreserved acknowledgment of her partiality (fatal partiality!) for those who will be her ruin; for they are her worst enemies.'

"'Pardon me, Prince,' answered I, 'I have not withdrawn myself from the Queen, but from the new parties, with whose politics I cannot identify myself, besides some exceptions I have taken against those who frequent them.'

"'Bah! bah!' exclaimed De Conti, 'your sagacity has got the better of your curiosity. All the wit and humour of that traitor Beaumarchais never seduced you to cultivate his society, as all the rest of the Queen's party have done.'

"'I never knew him to be accused of treason.'

"'Why, what do you call a fellow who sent arms to the Americans before the war was declared, without his Sovereign's consent?'

"'In that affair, I consider the Ministers as criminal as himself; for the Queen, to this day, believes that Beaumarchais was sanctioned by them and, you know, Her Majesty has ever since had an insuperable dislike to both De Maurepas and De Vergennes. But I have nothing to do with these things.'

"'Yes, yes, I understand you, Princess. Let her romp and play with the 'compate vous',—[A kind of game of forfeits, introduced for the diversion of the royal children and those of the Duchesse de Polignac.]—but who will 'compatire' (make allowance for) her folly? Bah! bah! bah! She is inconsistent, Princess. Not that I mean by this to insinuate that the Duchess is not the sincere friend and well-wisher of the Queen. Her immediate existence, her interest, and that of her family, are all dependent on the royal bounty. But can the Duchess answer for the same sincerity towards the Queen, with respect to her innumerable guests? No! Are not the sentiments of the Duchesses sister-in-law, the Comtesse Diane, in direct opposition to the absolute monarchy? Has she not always been an enthusiastic advocate for all those that have supported the American war? Who was it that crowned, at a public assembly, the democratical straight hairs of Dr. Franklin? Why the same Madame Comtesse Diane! Who was 'capa turpa' in applauding the men who were framing the American Constitution at Paris? Madame Comtesse Diane! Who was it, in like manner, that opposed all the Queen's arguments against the political conduct of France and Spain, relative to the war with England, in favour of the American Independence? The Comtesse Diane! Not for the love of that rising nation, or for the sacred cause of liberty; but from a taste for notoriety, a spirit of envy and jealousy, an apprehension lest the personal charms of the Queen might rob her of a part of those affections, which she herself exclusively hoped to alienate from that abortion, the Comtesse d'Artois, in whose service she is Maid of Honour, and handmaid to the Count. My

dear Princess, these are facts proved. Beaumarchais has delineated them all. Why, then, refuse to see me? Why withdraw her former confidence from the Comte d'Artois, when she lives in the society which promulgates antimonarchical principles? These are sad evidences of Her Majesty's inconsistency. She might as well see the Duc d'Orleans'

"Here my feelings overwhelmed me. I could contain myself no longer. The tears gushed from my eyes.

"'Oh, Prince!' exclaimed I, in a bitter agony of grief—'Oh, Prince! touch not that fatal string. For how many years has he not caused these briny tears of mine to flow from my burning eyes! The scalding drops have nearly parched up the spring of life!'"

Section 4

“The dismissal of M. Necker irritated the people beyond description. They looked upon themselves as insulted in their favourite. Mob succeeded mob, each more mischievous and daring than the former. The Duc d’Orleans continued busy in his work of secret destruction. In one of the popular risings, a sabre struck his bust, and its head fell, severed from its body. Many of the rioters (for the ignorant are always superstitious) shrunk back at this omen of evil to their idol. His real friends endeavoured to deduce a salutary warning to him from the circumstance. I was by when the Duc de Penthievre told him, in the presence of his daughter, that he might look upon this accident as prophetic of the fate of his own head, as well as the ruin of his family, if he persisted. He made no answer, but left the room.

“On the 14th of July, and two or three days preceding, the commotions took a definite object. The destruction of the Bastille was the point proposed, and it was achieved. Arms were obtained from the old pensioners at the Hotel des Invalides. Fifty thousand livres were distributed among the chiefs of those who influenced the Invalides to give up the arms.

“The massacre of the Marquis de Launay, commandant of the place, and of M. de Flesselles, and the fall of the citadel itself, were the consequence.

“Her Majesty was greatly affected when she heard of the murder of these officers and the taking of the Bastille. She frequently told me that the horrid circumstance originated in a diabolical Court intrigue, but never explained the particulars of the intrigue. She declared that both the officers and the citadel might have been saved had not the King’s orders for the march of the troops from Versailles, and the environs of Paris, been disobeyed. She blamed the precipitation of De Launay in ordering up the drawbridge and directing the few troops on it to fire upon the people. ‘There,’ she added, ‘the Marquis committed himself; as, in case of not succeeding, he could have no retreat, which every commander should take care to secure, before he allows the commencement of a general attack.

[Certainly, the French Revolution may date its epoch as far back as the taking of the Bastille; from that moment the troubles progressively continued, till the final extirpation of its illustrious victims. I was just returning from a mission to England when the storms began to threaten not only the most violent effects to France itself, but to all the land which was not divided from it by the watery element. The spirit of liberty, as the vine, which produces the most luxurious fruit, when abused becomes the most pernicious poison, was stalking abroad and revelling in blood and massacre. I myself was a witness to the enthusiastic national ball given on the ruins of the Bastille, while it was still stained and reeking with the hot blood of its late keeper, whose head I saw carried in triumph. Such was the effect on me that the Princesse de Lamballe asked me if I had known the Marquis de Launay. I answered in the negative; but told her from the knowledge I had of the English Revolution, I was fearful of a result similar to what followed the fall of the heads of Buckingham and Stafford. The Princess mentioning my observation to the Duc de Penthievre, they both burst into tears.]

The death of the Dauphin, the horrible Revolution of the 14th of July, the troubles about Necker, the insults and threats offered to the Comte d’Artois and herself,—overwhelmed the Queen with the most poignant grief.]

“She was most desirous of some understanding being established between the government and the representatives of the people, which she urged upon the King the expediency of personally attempting.

“The King, therefore, at her reiterated remonstrances and requests, presented himself, on the following day, with his brothers, to the National Assembly, to assure them of his firm determination to support the measures of the deputies, in everything conducive to the general good of his subjects. As a proof of his intentions, he said he had commanded the troops to leave Paris and Versailles.

“The King left the Assembly, as he had gone thither, on foot, amid the vociferations of ‘Vive le roi!’ and it was only through the enthusiasm of the deputies, who thus hailed His Majesty, and followed him in crowds to the palace, that the Comte d’Artois escaped the fury of an outrageous mob.

“The people filled every avenue of the palace, which vibrated with cries for the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin to show themselves at the balcony.

“‘Send for the Duchesse de Polignac to bring the royal children,’ cried I to Her Majesty.

“‘Not for the world!’ exclaimed the Queen. ‘She will be assassinated, and my children too, if she make her appearance before this infuriate mob. Let Madame and the Dauphin be brought unaccompanied.’

“The Queen, on this occasion, imitated her Imperial mother, Maria Theresa. She took the Dauphin in her arms, and Madame by her side, as that Empress had done when she presented herself to the Hungarian magnates; but the reception here was very different. It was not ‘moriamur pro nostra regina’. Not that they were ill received; but the furious party of the Duc d’Orleans often interrupted the cries of ‘Vive le roi! Vive la reine!’ etc., with those of ‘Vive la nation! Vive d’ Orleans!’ and many severe remarks on the family of the De Polignacs, which proved that the Queen’s caution on this occasion was exceedingly well-judged.

“Not to wound the feelings of the Duchesse de Polignac, I kept myself at a distance behind the Queen; but I was loudly called for by the mobility, and, ‘malgre moi’, was obliged, at the King and Queen’s request, to come forward.

“As I approached the balcony, I perceived one of the well-known agents of the Duc d’Orleans, whom I had noticed some time before in the throng, menacing me, the moment I made my appearance, with his upreared hand in fury. I was greatly terrified, but suppressed my agitation, and saluted the populace; but, fearful of exhibiting my weakness in sight of the wretch who had alarmed me, withdrew instantly, and had no sooner re-entered than I sunk motionless in the arms of one of the attendants. Luckily, this did not take place till I left the balcony. Had it been otherwise, the triumph to my declared enemies would have been too great.

“Recovering, I found myself surrounded by the Royal Family, who were all kindness and concern for my situation; but I could not subdue my tremor and affright. The horrid image of that monster seemed, still to threaten me.

“‘Come, come!’ said the King, ‘be not alarmed, I shall order a council of all the Ministers and deputies to-morrow, who will soon put an end to these riots!’

“We were ere long joined by the Prince de Conde, the Duc de Bourbon, and others, who implored the King not to part with the army, but to place himself, with all the Princes of the blood, at its head, as the only means to restore tranquillity to the country, and secure his own safety.

“The Queen was decidedly of the same opinion; and added, that, if the army were to depart, the King and his family ought to go with it; but the King, on the contrary, said he would not decide upon any measures whatever till he had heard the opinion of the Council.

“The Queen, notwithstanding the King’s indecision, was occupied, during the rest of the day and the whole of the night, in preparing for her intended; journey, as she hoped to persuade the King to follow the advice of the Princes, and not wait the result of the next day’s deliberation. Nay, so desirous was she of this, that she threw herself on her knees to the King, imploring him to leave Versailles and head the army, and offering to accompany him herself, on horseback, in uniform; but it was like speaking to a corpse he never answered.

“The Duchesse de Polignac came to Her Majesty in a state of the greatest agitation, in consequence of M. de Chinon having just apprised her that a most malicious report had been secretly spread among the deputies at Versailles that they were all to be blown up at their next meeting.

“The Queen was as much surprised as the Duchess, and scarcely less agitated. These wretched friends could only, in silence, compare notes of their mutual cruel misfortunes. Both for a time remained speechless at this new calamity. Surely this was not wanting to be added to those by which the Queen was already so bitterly oppressed.

“I was sent for by Her Majesty. Count Fersen accompanied me. He had just communicated to me what the Duchess had already repeated from M. Chinon to the Queen.

“The rumour had been set afloat merely as a new pretext for the continuation of the riots.

“The communication of the report, so likely to produce a disastrous effect, took place while the King was with his Ministers deliberating whether he should go to Paris, or save himself and family by joining the army.

“His Majesty was called from the council to the Queen’s apartment, and was there made acquainted with the circumstance which had so awakened the terror of the royal party. He calmly replied, ‘It is some days since this invention has been spread among the deputies; I was aware of it from the first; but from its being utterly impossible to be listened to for a moment by any one, I did not wish to afflict you by the mention of an impotent fabrication, which I myself treated with the contempt it justly merited. Nevertheless, I did not forget, yesterday, in the presence of both my brothers, who accompanied me to the National Assembly, there to exculpate myself from an imputation at which my nature revolts; and, from the manner in which it was received, I flatter myself that every honest Frenchman was fully satisfied that my religion will ever be an insurmountable barrier against my harbouring sentiments allied in the slightest degree to such actions.

“The King embraced the Queen, begged she would tranquilise herself, calmed the fears of the two ladies, thanked the gentlemen for the interest they took in his favour, and returned to the council, who, in his absence, had determined on his going to the Hotel de Ville at Paris, suggesting at the same time the names of several persons likely to be well received, if His Majesty thought proper to allow their accompanying him.

“During this interval, the Queen, still flattering herself that she should pursue her wished-for journey, ordered the carriages to be prepared and sent off to Rambouillet, where she said she should sleep; but this Her Majesty only stated for the purpose of distracting the attention of her pages and others about her from her real purpose. As it was well known that M. de St. Priest had pointed out Rambouillet as a fit asylum for the mob, she fancied that an understanding on the part of her suite that they were to halt there, and prepare for her reception, would protect her project of proceeding much farther.

“When the council had broken up and the King returned, he said to the Queen, ‘It is decided.’

“‘To go, I hope?’ said Her Majesty.

“‘No’—(though in appearance calm, the words remained on the lips of the King, and he stood for some moments incapable of utterance; but, recovering, added)—‘To Paris!’

“The Queen, at the word Paris, became frantic. She flung herself wildly into the arms of her friends.

“‘Nous sommes perdus! nous sommes perdus!’ cried she, in a passion of tears. But her dread was not for herself. She felt only for the danger to which the King was now going to expose himself; and she flew to him, and hung on his neck.

“‘And what,’ exclaimed she, ‘is to become of all our faithful friends and attendants!’

“‘I advise them all,’ answered His Majesty, ‘to make the best of their way out of France; and that as soon as possible.’

“By this time, the apartments of the Queen were filled with the attendants and the royal children, anxiously expecting every moment to receive the Queen’s command to proceed on their journey, but they were all ordered to retire to whence they came.

“The scene was that of a real tragedy. Nothing broke the silence but groans of the deepest affliction. Our consternation at the counter order cast all into a state of stupefied insensibility.

“The Queen was the only one whose fortitude bore her up proudly under this weight of misfortunes. Recovering from the frenzy of the first impression, she adjured her friends, by the love and obedience they had ever shown her and the King, to prepare immediately to fulfil his mandate and make themselves ready for the cruel separation!

“The Duchesse de Polignac and myself were, for some hours, in a state of agony and delirium.

“When the Queen saw the body-guards drawn up to accompany the King’s departure, she ran to the window, threw apart the sash, and was going to speak to them, to recommend the King to their care; but the Count Fersen prevented it.

“‘For God’s sake, Madame,’—exclaimed he, ‘do not commit yourself to the suspicion of having any doubts of the people!’

“When the King entered to take leave of her, and of all his most faithful attendants, he could only articulate, ‘Adieu!’ But when the Queen saw him accompanied by the Comte d’Estaing and others, whom, from their new principles, she knew to be popular favourites, she had command enough of herself not to shed a tear in their presence.

“No sooner, however, had the King left the room than it was as much as the Count Fersen, Princesse Elizabeth, and all of us could do to recover her from the most violent convulsions. At last, coming to herself, she retired with the Princess, the Duchess, and myself to await the King’s return; at the same time requesting the Count Fersen to follow His Majesty to the Hotel de Ville. Again and again she implored the Count, as she went, in case the King should be detained, to interest himself with all the foreign Ministers to interpose for his liberation.

“Versailles, when the King was gone, seemed like a city deserted in consequence of the plague. The palace was completely abandoned. All the attendants were dispersed. No one was seen in the streets. Terror prevailed. It was universally believed that the King would be detained in Paris. The high road from Versailles to Paris was crowded with all ranks of people, as if to catch a last look of their Sovereign.

“The Count Fersen set off instantly, pursuant to the Queen’s desire. He saw all that passed, and on his return related to me the history of that horrid day.

“He arrived at Paris just in time to see His Majesty take the national cockade from M. Bailly and place it in his hat. He, felt the Hotel de Ville shake with the long-continued cries of ‘Vive le roi!’ in consequence, which so affected the King that, for some moments, he was unable to express himself. ‘I myself,’ added the Count, ‘was so moved at the effect on His Majesty, in being thus warmly received by his Parisian subjects, which portrayed the paternal emotions of his long-lacerated heart, that every other feeling was paralysed for a moment, in exultation at the apparent unanimity between the Sovereign and his people. But it did not,’ continued the Ambassador, ‘paralyse the artful tongue of Bailly, the Mayor of Paris. I could have kicked the fellow for his malignant impudence; for, even in the cunning compliment he framed, he studied to humble the afflicted Monarch by telling the people it was to them he owed the sovereign authority.

“‘But,’ pursued the Count, ‘considering the situation of Louis XVI. and that of his family, agonised as they must have been during his absence, from the Queen’s impression that the Parisians would never again allow him to see Versailles, how great was our rapture when we saw him safely replaced in his carriage, and returning to those who were still lamenting him as lost!

“‘When I left Her Majesty in the morning, she was nearly in a state of mental aberration. When I saw her again in the evening, the King by her side, surrounded by her family, the Princesse Eizabeth, and yourself, madame’ said the kind Count, ‘she appeared to me like a person risen from the dead and restored to life. Her excess of joy at the first moment was beyond description!’

“Count Fersen might well say the first moment, for the pleasure of the Queen was of short duration. Her heart was doomed to bleed afresh, when the thrill of delight, at what she considered the escape of her husband, was past, for she had already seen her chosen friend, the Duchesse de Polignac, for the last time.

“Her Majesty was but just recovered from the effects of the morning’s agitation, when the Duchess, the Duke, his sister, and all his family set off. It was impossible for her to take leave of her friend. The hour was late—about midnight. At the same time departed the Comte d’Artois and his family, the Prince de Conde and his, the Prince of Hesse d’Armstadt, and all those who were likely to be suspected by the people.

“Her Majesty desired the Count Fersen to see the Duchess in her name. When the King heard the request, he exclaimed:

“‘What a cruel state for Sovereigns, my dear Count! To be compelled to separate ourselves from our most faithful attendants, and not be allowed, for fear of compromising others or our own lives, to take a last farewell!’

“‘Ah!’ said the Queen, ‘I fear so too. I fear it is a last farewell to all our friends!’

“The Count saw the Duchess a few moments before she left Versailles. Pisani, the Venetian Ambassador, and Count Fersen, helped her on the coachbox, where she rode disguised.

“What must have been most poignantly mortifying to the fallen favourite was, that, in the course of her journey, she met with her greatest enemy, (Necker) who was returning, triumphant, to Paris, called by the voice of that very nation by whom she and her family were now forced from its territory,—Necker, who himself conceived that she, who now went by him into exile, while he himself returned to the greatest of victories, had thwarted all his

former plans of operation, and, from her influence over the Queen, had caused his dismission and temporary banishment.

“For my own part, I cannot but consider this sudden desertion of France by those nearest the throne as ill-judged. Had all the Royal Family, remained, is it likely that the King and Queen would have been watched with such despotic vigilance? Would not confidence have created confidence, and the breach have been less wide between the King and his people?

“When the father and his family will now be thoroughly reconciled, Heaven alone can tell!”

Section 5

“Barnave often lamented his having been betrayed, by a love of notoriety, into many schemes, of which his impetuosity blinded him to the consequences. With tears in his eyes, he implored me to impress the Queen’s mind with the sad truths he inculcated. He said his motives had been uniformly the same, however he might have erred in carrying them into action; but now he relied on my friendship for my royal mistress to give efficacy to his earnest desire to atone for those faults, of which he had become convinced by dear-bought experience. He gave me a list of names for Her Majesty, in which were specified all the Jacobins who had emissaries throughout France, for the purpose of creating on the same day, and at the same hour, an alarm of something like the ‘Vesparo Siciliano’ (a general insurrection to murder all the nobility and burn their palaces, which, in fact, took place in many parts of France), the object of which was to give the Assembly, by whom all the regular troops were disbanded, a pretext for arming the people as a national guard, thus creating a perpetual national faction.

“The hordes of every faubourg now paraded in this new democratic livery. Even some of them, who were in the actual service of the Court, made no scruple of decorating themselves thus, in the very face of their Sovereign. The King complained, but the answer made to him was that the nation commanded.

“The very first time Their Majesties went to the royal chapel, after the embodying of the troops with the national guards, all the persons belonging to it were accoutred in the national uniform. The Queen was highly incensed, and deeply affected at this insult offered to the King’s authority by the persons employed in the sacred occupations of the Church. ‘Such persons,’ said Her Majesty, ‘would, I had hoped, have been the last to interfere with politics.’ She was about to order all those who preferred their uniforms to their employments to be discharged from the King’s service; but my advice, coupled with that of Barnave, dissuaded her from executing so dangerous a threat. On being assured that those, perhaps, who might be selected to replace the offenders might refuse the service, if not allowed the same ridiculous prerogatives, and thus expose Their Royal Majesties to double mortification, the Queen seemed satisfied, and no more was said upon the subject, except to an Italian soprano, to whom the King signified his displeasure at his singing a ‘salva regina’ in the dress of a grenadier of the new faction.

“The singer took the hint and never again intruded his uniform into the chapel.

“Necker, notwithstanding the enthusiasm his return produced upon the people, felt mortified in having lost the confidence of the King. He came to me, exclaiming that, unless Their Majesties distinguished him by some mark of their royal favour, his influence must be lost with the National Assembly. He perceived, he said, that the councils of the King were more governed by the advice of the Queen’s favourite, the Abbe Vermond, than by his (Necker’s). He begged I would assure Her Majesty that Vermond was quite as obnoxious to the people as the Duchesse de Polignac had ever been; for it was generally known that Her Majesty was completely guided by him, and, therefore, for her own safety and the tranquillity of national affairs, he humbly suggested the prudence of sending him from the Court, at least for a time.

“I was petrified at hearing a Minister dare presume thus to dictate the line of conduct which the Queen of France, his Sovereign, should pursue with respect to her most private servants.

Such was my indignation at this cruel wish to dismiss every object of her choice, especially one from whom, owing to long habits of intimacy since her childhood, a separation would be rendered, by her present situation, peculiarly cruel, that nothing but the circumstances in which the Court then stood could have given me patience to listen to him.

"I made no answer. Upon my silence, Necker subjoined, 'You must perceive, Princess, that I am actuated for the general good of the nation.'

"'And I hope, monsieur, for the prerogatives of the monarchy also,' replied I.

"'Certainly,' said Necker. 'But if Their Majesties continue to be guided by others, and will not follow my advice, I cannot answer for the consequences.'

"I assured the Minister that I would be the faithful bearer of his commission, however unpleasant.

"Knowing the character of the Queen, in not much relishing being dictated to with respect to her conduct in relation to the persons of her household, especially the Abbe Vermond, and aware, at the same time, of her dislike to Necker, who thus undertook to be her director, I felt rather awkward in being the medium of the Minister's suggestions. But what was my surprise, on finding her prepared, and totally indifferent as to the privation.

"'I foresaw,' replied Her Majesty, 'that Vermond would become odious to the present order of things, merely because he had been a faithful servant, and long attached to my interest; but you may tell M. Necker that the Abbe leaves Versailles this very night, by my express order, for Vienna.'

"If the proposal of Necker astonished me, the Queen's reception of it astonished me still more. What a lesson is this for royal favourites! The man who had been her tutor, and who, almost from her childhood, never left her, the constant confidant for fifteen or sixteen years, was now sent off without a seeming regret.

"I doubt not, however, that the Queen had some very powerful secret motive for the sudden change in her conduct towards the Abbe, for she was ever just in all her concerns, even to her avowed enemies; but I was happy that she seemed to express no particular regret at the Minister's suggested policy. I presume, from the result, that I myself had overrated the influence of the Abbe over the mind of his royal pupil; that he had by no means the sway imputed to him; and that Marie Antoinette merely considered him as the necessary instrument of her private correspondence, which he had wholly managed.[30]

"But a circumstance presently occurred which aroused Her Majesty from this calmness and indifference. The King came in to inform her that La Fayette, during the night, had caused the guards to desert from the palace of Versailles.

"The effect on her of this intelligence was like the lightning which precedes a loud clap of thunder.

"Everything that followed was perfectly in character, and shook every nerve of the royal authority.

"'Thus,' exclaimed Marie Antoinette, 'thus, Sire, have you humiliated yourself, in condescending to go to Paris, without having accomplished the object. You have not regained the confidence of your subjects. Oh, how bitterly do I deplore the loss of that confidence! It exists no longer. Alas! when will it be restored!'

[30] *The truth is, Her Majesty had already taken leave of the Abbe, in the presence of the King, unknown to the Princess; or, more properly, the Abbe had taken an affectionate leave of them.*

“The French guards, indeed, had been in open insurrection through the months of June and July, and all that could be done was to preserve one single company of grenadiers, by means of their commander, the Baron de Leval, faithful to their colours. This company had now been influenced by General La Fayette to desert and join their companions, who had enrolled themselves in the Paris national guard.

“Messieurs de Bouille and de Luxembourg being interrogated by the Queen respecting the spirit of the troops under their immediate command, M. de Bouille answered, Madame, I should be very sorry to be compelled to undertake any internal operation with men who have been seduced from their allegiance, and are daily paid by a faction which aims at the overthrow of its legitimate Sovereign. I would not answer for a man that has been in the neighbourhood of the seditious national troops, or that has read the inflammatory discussions of the National Assembly. If Your Majesty and the King wish well to the nation—I am sorry to say it—its happiness depends on your quitting immediately the scenes of riot and placing yourselves in a situation to treat with the National Assembly on equal terms, whereby the King may be unbiassed and unfettered by a compulsive, overbearing mob; and this can only be achieved by your flying to a place of safety. That you may find such a place, I will answer with my life!’

“‘Yes,’ said M. de Luxembourg, ‘I think we may both safely answer that, in such a case, you will find a few Frenchmen ready to risk a little to save all!’ And both concurred that there was no hope of salvation for the King or country but through the resolution they advised.

“‘This,’ said the Queen, ‘will be a very difficult task. His Majesty, I fear, will never consent to leave France.’

“‘Then, Madame,’ replied they, ‘we can only regret that we have nothing to offer but our own perseverance in the love and service of our King and his oppressed family, to whom we deplore we can now be useful only with our feeble wishes.’

“‘Well, gentlemen,’ answered Her Majesty, ‘you must not despair of better prospects. I will take an early opportunity of communicating your loyal sentiments to the King, and will hear his opinion on the subject before I give you a definite answer. I thank you, in the name of His Majesty, as well as on my own account, for your good intentions towards us.’

“Scarcely had these gentlemen left the palace, when a report prevailed that the King, his family, and Ministers, were about to withdraw to some fortified situation. It was also industriously rumoured that, as soon as they were in safety, the National Assembly would be forcibly dismissed, as the Parliament had been by Louis XIV. The reports gained universal belief when it became known that the King had ordered the Flanders regiment to Versailles.

“The National Assembly now daily watched the royal power more and more assiduously. New sacrifices of the prerogatives of the nobles were incessantly proposed by them to the King.

“When His Majesty told the Queen that he had been advised by Necker to sanction the abolition of the privileged nobility, and that all distinctions, except the order of the Holy Ghost to himself and the Dauphin, were also annihilated by the Assembly, even to the order of Maria Theresa, which she could no longer wear, ‘These, Sire,’ answered she, in extreme anguish, ‘are trifles, so far as they regard myself. I do not think I have twice worn the order of Maria Theresa since my arrival in this once happy country. I need it not. The immortal memory of her who gave me being is engraven on my heart; that I shall wear forever, none can wrest it from me. But what grieves me to the soul is your having sanctioned these decrees of the National Assembly upon the mere ‘ipse dixit’ of M. Necker.’

“‘I have only, given my sanction to such as I thought most necessary to tranquilise the minds of those who doubted my sincerity; but I have withheld it from others, which, for the good of my people, require maturer consideration. On these, in a full Council, and in your presence, I shall again deliberate.’

“‘Oh, said the Queen, with tears in her eyes, could but the people hear you, and know, once for all, how to appreciate the goodness of your heart, as I do now, they would cast themselves at your feet, and supplicate your forgiveness for having shown such ingratitude to your paternal interest for their welfare!’

“But this unfortunate refusal to sanction all the decrees sent by the National Assembly, though it proceeded from the best motives, produced the worst effects. Duport, De Lameth, and Barnave well knew the troubles such a course must create. Of this they forewarned His Majesty, before any measure was laid before him for approval. They cautioned him not to trifle with the deputies. They assured him that half measures would only rouse suspicion. They enforced the necessity of uniform assentation, in order to lull the Mirabeau party, who were canvassing for a majority to set up D’ORLEANS, to whose interest Mirabeau and his myrmidons were then devoted. The scheme of Duport, De Lameth, and Barnave was to thwart and weaken the Mirabeau and Orleans faction, by gradually persuading them, in consequence of the King’s compliance with whatever the Assembly exacted, that they could do no better than to let him into a share of the executive power; for now nothing was left to His Majesty but responsibility, while the privileges of grace and justice had become merely nominal, with the one dangerous exception of the veto, to which he could never have recourse without imminent peril to his cause and to himself.

“Unfortunately for His Majesty’s interest, he was too scrupulous to act, even through momentary policy, distinctly against his conscience. When he gave way, it was with reluctance, and often with an avowal, more or less express, that he only complied with necessity against conviction. His very sincerity made him appear the reverse. His adherents consequently dwindled, while the Orleans faction became immeasurably augmented.

“In the midst of these perplexities, an Austrian courier was stopped with despatches from Prince Kaunitz. These, though unsought for on the part of Her Majesty, though they contained a friendly advice to her to submit to the circumstances of the times, and though, luckily, they were couched in terms favourable to the Constitution, showed the mob that there was a correspondence with Vienna, carried on by the Queen, and neither Austria nor the Queen were deemed the friends either of the people or of the Constitution. To have received the letters was enough for the faction.

“Affairs were now ripening gradually into something like a crisis, when the Flanders regiment arrived. The note of preparation had been sounded. ‘Let us go to Versailles, and bring the King away from his evil counsellors,’ was already in the mouths of the Parisians.

“In the meantime, Dumourier, who had been leagued with the Orleans faction, became disgusted with it. He knew the deep schemes of treason which were in train against the Royal Family, and, in disguise, sought the Queen at Versailles, and had an interview with Her Majesty in my presence. He assured her that an abominable insurrection was ripe for explosion among the mobs of the faubourgs; gave her the names of the leaders, who had received money to promote its organisation; and warned her that the massacre of the Royal Family was the object of the manoeuvre, for the purpose of declaring the Duke of Orleans the constitutional King; that he was to be proclaimed by Mirabeau, who had already received a considerable sum in advance, for distribution among the populace, to ensure their support; and that Mirabeau, in return for his co-operation, was to be created a Duke, with the office of

Prime Minister and Secretary of State, and to have the framing of the Constitution, which was to be modelled from that of Great Britain. It was farther concerted that D'ORLEANS was to show himself in the midst of the confusion, and the crown to be conferred upon him by public acclamation.

"On his knees Dumourier implored Her Majesty to regard his voluntary discovery of this infamous and diabolical plot as a proof of his sincere repentance. He declared he came disinterestedly to offer himself as a sacrifice to save her, the King, and her family from the horrors then threatening their lives, from the violence of an outrageous mob of regicides; he called God to witness that he was actuated by no other wish than to atone for his error, and die in their defence; he looked for no reward beyond the King's forgiveness of his having joined the Orleans faction; he never had any view in joining that faction but that of aiding the Duke, for the good of his country, in the reform of ministerial abuses, and strengthening the royal authority by the salutary laws of the National Assembly; but he no sooner discovered that impure schemes of personal aggrandisement gave the real impulse to these pretended reformers than he forsook their unholy course. He supplicated Her Majesty to lose no time, but to allow him to save her from the destruction to which she would inevitably be exposed; that he was ready to throw himself at the King's feet, to implore his forgiveness also, and to assure him of his profound penitence, and his determination to renounce forever the factious Orleans party.

"As Her Majesty would not see any of those who offered themselves, except in my presence, I availed myself, in this instance, of the opportunity it gave me by enforcing the arguments of Dumourier. But all I could say, all the earnest representations to be deduced from this critical crisis, could not prevail with her, even so far as to persuade her to temporise with Dumourier, as she had done with many others on similar occasions. She was deaf and inexorable. She treated all he had said as the effusion of an overheated imagination, and told him she had no faith in traitors. Dumourier remained upon his knees while she was replying, as if stupefied; but at the word traitor he started and roused himself; and then, in a state almost of madness, seized the Queen's dress, exclaiming, 'Allow yourself to be persuaded before it is too late! Let not your misguided prejudice against me hurry you to your own and your children's destruction; let it not get the better, Madame, of your good sense and reason; the fatal moment is near; it is at hand!' Upon this, turning, he addressed himself to me.

"'Oh, Princess,' he cried, 'be her guardian angel, as you have hitherto been her only friend, and use your never-failing influence. I take God once more to witness, that I am sincere in all I have said; that all I have disclosed is true. This will be the last time I shall have it in my power to be of any essential service to you, Madame, and my Sovereign. The National Assembly will put it out of my power for the future, without becoming a traitor to my country.'

"'Rise, monsieur,' said the Queen, 'and serve your country better than you have served your King!'

"'Madame, I obey.'

"When he was about to leave the room, I again, with tears, besought Her Majesty not to let him depart thus, but to give him some hope, that, after reflection, she might perhaps endeavour to soothe the King's anger. But in vain. He withdrew very much affected. I even ventured, after his departure, to intercede for his recall.

"'He has pledged himself,' said I, 'to save you, Madame!'

"'My dear Princess,' replied the Queen, 'the goodness of your own heart will not allow you to have sinister ideas of others. This man is like all of the same stamp. They are all traitors;

and will only hurry us the sooner, if we suffer ourselves to be deceived by them, to an ignominious death! I seek no safety for myself.'

"'But he offered to serve the King also, Madame.'

"'I am not,' answered Her Majesty, 'Henrietta of France. I will never stoop to ask a pension of the murderers of my husband; nor will I leave the King, my son, or my adopted country, or even meanly owe my existence to wretches who have destroyed the dignity of the Crown and trampled under foot the most ancient monarchy in Europe! Under its ruins they will bury their King and myself. To owe our safety to them would be more hateful than any death they can prepare for us.'

"While the Queen was in this state of agitation, a note was presented to me with a list of the names of the officers of the Flanders regiment, requesting the honour of an audience of the Queen.

"The very idea of seeing the Flanders officers flushed Her Majesty's countenance with an ecstasy of joy. She said she would retire to compose herself, and receive them in two hours.

"The Queen saw the officers in her private cabinet, and in my presence. They were presented to her by me. They told Her Majesty that, though they had changed their paymaster, they had not changed their allegiance to their Sovereign or herself, but were ready to defend both with their lives. They placed one hand on the hilt of their swords, and, solemnly lifting the other up to Heaven, swore that the weapons should never be wielded but for the defence of the King and Queen, against all foes, whether foreign or domestic.

"This unexpected loyalty burst on us like the beauteous rainbow, after a tempest, by the dawn of which we are taught to believe the world is saved from a second deluge.

"The countenance of Her Majesty brightened over the gloom which had oppressed her, like the heavenly sun dispersing threatening clouds, and making the heart of the poor mariner bound with joy. Her eyes spoke her secret rapture. It was evident she felt even unusual dignity in the presence of these noble-hearted warriors, when comparing them with him whom she had just dismissed. She graciously condescended to speak to every one of them, and one and all were enchanted with her affability.

"She said she was no longer the Queen who could compensate loyalty and valour; but the brave soldier found his reward in the fidelity of his service, which formed the glory of his immortality. She assured them she had ever been attached to the army, and would make it her study to recommend every individual, meriting attention, to the King.

"Loud bursts of repeated acclamations and shouts of 'Vive la reine!' instantly followed her remarks. She thanked the officers most graciously; and, fearing to commit herself, by saying more, took her leave, attended by me; but immediately sent me back, to thank them again in her name.

"They departed, shouting as they went, 'Vive la reine! Vive la Princesse! Vive le roi, le Dauphin, et toute la famille royale!'

"When the National Assembly saw the officers going to and coming from the King's palace with such demonstrations of enthusiasm, they took alarm, and the regicide faction hastened on the crisis for which it had been longing. It was by no means unusual for the chiefs of regiments, destined to form part of the garrison of a royal residence, to be received by the Sovereign on their arrival, and certainly only natural that they should be so; but in times of excitement trifling events have powerful effects.

“But if the National Assembly began to tremble for their own safety, and had already taken secret, measures to secure it, by conspiring to put an instantaneous end to the King’s power, against which they had so long been plotting, when the Flanders regiment arrived, it may be readily conceived what must have been their emotions on the fraternisation of this regiment with the body-guard, and on the scene to which the dinner, given to the former troops by the latter, so unpremeditatedly led.

“On the day of this fatal dinner I remarked to the Queen, ‘What a beautiful sight it must be to behold, in these troublesome times, the happy union of such a meeting!’

“‘It must indeed!’ replied the King; ‘and the pleasure I feel in knowing it would be redoubled had I the privilege of entertaining the Flanders regiment, as the body-guards are doing.’

“‘Heaven forbid!’ cried Her Majesty; ‘Heaven forbid that you should think of such a thing! The Assembly would never forgive us!’

“After we had dined, the Queen sent to the Marquise de Tourzel for the Dauphin. When he came, the Queen told him about her having seen the brave officers on their arrival; and how gaily those good officers had left the palace, declaring they would die rather than suffer any harm to come to him, or his papa and mamma; and that at that very time they were all dining at the theatre.

“‘Dining in the theatre, mamma?’ said the young, Prince. ‘I never heard of people dining in a theatre!’

“‘No, my dear child,’ replied Her Majesty, ‘it is not generally allowed; but they are doing so, because the body-guards are giving a dinner to this good Flanders regiment; and the Flanders regiment are so brave that the guards chose the finest place they could think of to entertain them in, to show how much they like them; that is the reason why they are dining in the gay, painted theatre.’

“‘Oh, mamma!’ exclaimed the Dauphin, whom the Queen adored, ‘Oh, papa!’ cried he, looking at the King, ‘how I should like to see them!’

“‘Let us go and satisfy the child!’ said the King, instantly starting up from his seat.

“The Queen took the Dauphin by the hand, and they proceeded to the theatre. It was all done in a moment. There was no premeditation on the part of the King or Queen; no invitation on the part of the officers. Had I been asked, I should certainly have followed the Queen; but just as the King rose, I left the room. The Prince being eager to see the festival, they set off immediately, and when I returned to the apartment they were gone. Not being very well, I remained where I was; but most of the household had already followed Their Majesties.

“On the Royal Family making their appearance, they were received with the most unequivocal shouts of general enthusiasm by the troops. Intoxicated with the pleasure of seeing Their Majesties among them, and overheated with the juice of the grape, they gave themselves up to every excess of joy, which the circumstances and the situation of Their Majesties were so well calculated to inspire. ‘Oh! Richard! oh, mon roi!’ was sung, as well as many other loyal songs. The healths of the King, Queen, and Dauphin were drunk, till the regiments were really inebriated with the mingled influence of wine and shouting vivas!

“When the royal party retired, they were followed by all the military to the very palace doors, where they sung, danced, embraced each other, and gave way to all the frantic demonstrations of devotedness to the royal cause which the excitement of the scene and the table could produce. Throngs, of course, collected to get near the Royal Family. Many persons in the rush were trampled on, and one or two men, it was said, crushed to death. The

Dauphin and King were delighted; but the Queen, in giving the Princesse Elizabeth and myself an account of the festival, foresaw the fatal result which would ensue; and deeply deplored the marked enthusiasm with which they had been greeted and followed by the military.

“There was one more military spectacle, a public breakfast which took place on the second of October. Though none of the Royal Family appeared at it, it was no less injurious to their interests than the former. The enemies of the Crown spread reports all over Paris, that the King and Queen had manoeuvred to pervert the minds of the troops so far as to make them declare against the measures of the National Assembly. It is not likely that the Assembly, or politics, were even spoken of at the breakfast; but the report did as much mischief as the reality would have done. This was quite sufficient to encourage the D’ORLEANS and Mirabeau faction in the Assembly to the immediate execution of their long-meditated scheme, of overthrowing the monarchy.

“On the very day following, Duport, De Lameth, and Barnave sent their confidential agent to apprise the Queen that certain deputies had already fully matured a plot to remove the King, nay, to confine Her Majesty from him in a distant part of France, that her influence over his mind might no farther thwart their premeditated establishment of a Constitution.

“But others of this body, and the more powerful and subtle portion, had a deeper object, so depraved, that, even when forewarned, the Queen could not deem it possible; but of which she was soon convinced by their infernal acts.

“The riotous faction, for the purpose of accelerating this denouement, had contrived, by buying up all the corn and sending it out of the country, to reduce the populace to famine, and then to make it appear that the King and Queen had been the monopolisers, and the extravagance of Marie Antoinette and her largesses to Austria and her favourites, the cause. The plot was so deeply laid that the wretches who, undertook to effect the diabolical scheme were metamorphosed in the Queen’s livery, so that all the odium might fall on her unfortunate Majesty. At the head of the commission of monopolisers was Luckner, who had taken a violent dislike to the Queen, in consequence of his having been refused some preferment, which he attributed to her influence. Mirabeau, who was still in the background, and longing to take a more prominent part, helped it on as much as possible. Pinet, who had been a confidential agent of the Duc d’Orleans, himself told the Duc de Penthievre that D’ORLEANS had monopolised all the corn. This communication, and the activity of the Count Fersen, saved France, and Paris in particular, from perishing for the want of bread. Even at the moment of the abominable masquerade, in which Her Majesty’s agents were made to appear the enemies who were starving the French people, out of revenge for the checks imposed by them on the royal authority, it was well known to all the Court that both Her Majesty and the King were grieved to the soul at their piteous want, and distributed immense sums for the relief of the poor sufferers, as did the Duc de Penthievre, the Duchesse d’Orleans, the Prince de Conde, the Duc and Duchesse de Bourbon, and others; but these acts were done privately, while he who had created the necessity took to himself the exclusive credit of the relief, and employed thousands daily to propagate reports of his generosity. Mirabeau, then the factotum agent of the operations of the Palais Royal and its demagogues, greatly added to the support of this impression. Indeed, till undeceived afterwards, he believed it to be really the Duc d’Orleans who had succoured the people.

“I dispensed two hundred and twenty thousand livres merely to discover the names of the agents who had been employed to carry on this nefarious plot to exasperate the people against the throne by starvation imputed to the Sovereign. Though money achieved the discovery in time to clear the characters of my royal mistress and the King, the detection only followed the

mischief of the crime. But even the rage thus wickedly excited was not enough to carry through the plot. In the faubourgs of Paris, where the women became furies, two hundred thousand livres were distributed ere the horror could be completely exposed.

“But it is time for me to enter upon the scenes to which all the intrigues I have detailed were intended to lead—the removal of the Royal Family from Versailles.

“My heart sickens when I retrace these moments of anguish. The point to which they are to conduct us yet remains one of the mysteries of fate.”

Section 6

“Her Majesty had been so thoroughly lulled into security by the enthusiasm of the regiments at Versailles that she treated all the reports from Paris with contempt. Nothing was apprehended from that quarter, and no preparations were consequently made for resistance or protection. She was at Little Trianon when the news of the approach of the desolating torrent arrived. The King was hunting. I presented to her the commandant of the troops at Versailles, who assured Her Majesty that a murderous faction, too powerful, perhaps, for resistance, was marching principally against her royal person, with La Fayette at their head, and implored her to put herself and valuables in immediate safety; particularly all her correspondence with the Princes, emigrants, and foreign Courts, if she had no means of destroying them.

“Though the Queen was somewhat awakened to the truth by this earnest appeal, yet she still considered the extent of the danger as exaggerated, and looked upon the representation as partaking, in a considerable degree, of the nature of all reports in times of popular commotion.

“Presently, however, a more startling omen appeared, in a much milder but ambiguous communication from General La Fayette. He stated that he was on his march from Paris with the national guard, and part of the people, coming to make remonstrances; but he begged Her Majesty to rest assured that no disorder would take place, and that he himself would vouch that there should be none.

“The King was instantly sent for to the heights of Meudon, while the Queen set off from Little Trianon, with me, for Versailles.

“The first movements were commenced by a few women, or men in women’s clothes, at the palace gates of Versailles. The guards refused them entrance, from an order they had received to that effect from La Fayette. The consternation produced by their resentment was a mere prelude to the horrid tragedy that succeeded.

“The information now pouring in from different quarters increased Her Majesty’s alarm every moment. The order of La Fayette, not to let the women be admitted, convinced her that there was something in agitation, which his unexplained letter made her sensible was more to be feared than if he had signified the real situation and danger to which she was exposed.

“A messenger was forthwith despatched for M. La Fayette, and another, by order of the Queen, for M. de St. Priest, to prepare a retreat for the Royal Family, as the Parisian mob’s advance could no longer be doubted. Everything necessary was accordingly got ready.

“La Fayette now arrived at Versailles in obedience to the message, and, in the presence of all the Court and Ministers, assured the King that he could answer for the Paris army, at the head of which he intended to march, to prevent disorders; and advised the admission of the women into the palace, who, he said, had nothing to propose but a simple memorial relative to the scarcity of bread.

“The Queen said to him, ‘Remember, monsieur, you have pledged your honour for the King’s safety.’

“‘And I hope, Madame, to be able to redeem it.’

“He then left Versailles to return to his post with the army.

“A limited number of the women were at length admitted; and so completely did they seem satisfied with the reception they met with from the King, as, in all appearance, to have quieted their riotous companions. The language of menace and remonstrance had changed into shouts of ‘Vive le roi!’ The apprehensions of Their Majesties were subdued; and the whole system of operation, which had been previously adopted for the Royal Family’s quitting Versailles, was, in consequence, unfortunately changed.

“But the troops, that had been hitherto under arms for the preservation of order, in going back to their hotel, were assailed and fired at by the mob.

“The return of the body-guards, thus insulted in going to and coming from the palace, caused the Queen and the Court to resume the resolution of instantly retiring from Versailles; but it was now too late. They were stopped by the municipality and the mob of the city, who were animated to excess against the Queen by one of the bass singers of the French opera.—[La Haise]

“Every hope of tranquillity was now shaken by the hideous howlings which arose from all quarters. Intended flight had become impracticable. Atrocious expressions were levelled against the Queen, too shocking for repetition. I shudder when I reflect to what a degree of outrage the ‘poissardes’ of Paris were excited, to express their abominable designs on the life of that most adored of Sovereigns.

“Early in the evening Her Majesty came to my apartment, in company with one of her female attendants. She was greatly agitated. She brought all her jewels and a considerable quantity of papers, which she had begun to collect together immediately on her arrival from Trianon, as the commandant had recommended.[31]

“Notwithstanding the fatigue and agitation which the Queen must have suffered during the day, and the continued threats, horrible howlings, and discharge of firearms during the night, she had courage enough to visit the bedchambers of her children and then to retire to rest in her own.

“But her rest was soon fearfully interrupted. Horrid cries at her chamber door of ‘Save the Queen! Save the Queen! or she will be assassinated!’ aroused her. The faithful guardian who gave the alarm was never heard more. He was murdered in her defence! Her Majesty herself only escaped the poignards of immediate death by flying to the King’s apartment, almost in the same state as she lay in bed, not having had time to screen herself with any covering but what was casually thrown over her by the women who assisted her in her flight; while one well acquainted with the palace is said to have been seen busily engaged in encouraging the regicides who thus sought her for midnight murder. The faithful guards who defended the entrance to the room of the intended victim of these desperadoes took shelter in the room itself upon her leaving it, and were alike threatened with instant death by the grenadier assassins for having defeated them in their fiend-like purpose; they were, however, saved by

[31] *Neither Her Majesty nor the Princess ever returned to Versailles after the sixth of that fatal October! Part of the papers, brought by the Queen to the apartment of the Princess, were tacked by me on two of my petticoats; the under one three fold, one on the other, and outside; and the upper one, three or four fold double on the inside; and thus I left the room with this paper undergarment, which put me to no inconvenience. Returning to the Princess, I was ordered to go to Lisle, there take the papers from their hiding-place, and deliver them, with others, to the same person who received the box, of which mention will be found in another part of this work. I was not to take any letters, and was to come back immediately.*
As I was leaving the apartment Her Majesty said something to Her Highness which I did not hear. The Princess turned round very quickly, and kissing me on the forehead, said in Italian, “My dear little Englishwoman, for Heaven’s sake be careful of yourself, for I should never forgive myself if any misfortune were to befall you.”
“Nor I,” said Her Majesty.

the generous interposition and courage of two gentlemen, who, offering themselves as victims in their place, thus brought about a temporary accommodation between the regular troops and the national guard.

“All this time General La Fayette never once appeared. It is presumed that he himself had been deceived as to the horrid designs of the mob, and did not choose to show himself, finding it impossible to check the impetuosity of the horde he had himself brought to action, in concurring to countenance their first movements from Paris. Posterity will decide how far he was justified in pledging himself for the safety of the Royal Family, while he was heading a riotous mob, whose atrocities were guaranteed from punishment or check by the sanction of his presence and the faith reposed in his assurance. Was he ignorant, or did he only pretend to be so, of the incalculable mischief inevitable from giving power and a reliance on impunity to such an unreasoning mass? By any military operation, as commander-in-chief, he might have turned the tide. And why did he not avail himself of that authority with which he had been invested by the National Assembly, as the delegates of the nation, for the general safety and guardianship of the people? for the people, of whom he was the avowed protector, were themselves in peril: it was only the humanity (or rather, in such a crisis, the imbecility) of Louis XVI. that prevented them from being fired on; and they would inevitably have been sacrificed, and that through the want of policy in their leader, had not this mistaken mercy of the King prevented his guards from offering resistance to the murderers of his brave defenders!

“The cry of ‘Queen! Queen!’ now resounded from the lips of the cannibals stained with the blood of her faithful guards. She appeared, shielded by filial affection, between her two innocent children, the threatened orphans! But the sight of so much innocence and heroic courage paralysed the hands uplifted for their massacre!

“A tiger voice cried out, ‘No children!’ The infants were hurried away from the maternal side, only to witness the author of their being offering up herself, eagerly and instantly, to the sacrifice, an ardent and delighted victim to the hoped-for preservation of those, perhaps, orphans, dearer to her far than life! Her resignation and firm step in facing the savage cry that was thundering against her, disarmed the ferocious beasts that were hungering and roaring for their prey!

“Mirabeau, whose immense head and gross figure could not be mistaken, is said to have been the first among the mob to have sonorously chanted, ‘To Paris!’ His myrmidons echoed and re-echoed the cry upon the signal. He then hastened to the Assembly to contravene any measures the King might ask in opposition. The riots increasing, the Queen said to His Majesty:

“‘Oh, Sire! why am I not animated with the courage of Maria Theresa? Let me go with my children to the National Assembly, as she did to the Hungarian Senate, with my Imperial brother, Joseph, in her arms and Leopold in her womb, when Charles the Seventh of Bavaria had deprived her of all her German dominions, and she had already written to the Duchesse de Lorraine to prepare her an asylum, not knowing where she should be delivered of the precious charge she was then bearing; but I, like the mother of the Gracchi, like Cornelia, more esteemed for my birth than for my marriage, am the wife of the King of France, and I see we shall be murdered in our beds for the want of our own exertions!’

“The King remained as if paralysed and stupefied, and made no answer. The Princesse Elizabeth then threw herself at the Queen’s feet, imploring her to consent to go to Paris.

“‘To Paris!’ exclaimed Her Majesty.

“‘Yes, Madame,’ said the King. ‘I will put an end to these horrors; and tell the people so.’

“On this, without waiting for the Queen’s answer, he opened the balcony, and told the populace he was ready to depart with his family.

“This sudden change caused a change equally sudden in the rabble mob. All shouted, ‘Vive le roi! Vive la nation!’

“Re-entering the room from the window, the King said, ‘It is done. This affair will soon be terminated.’

“‘And with it,’ said the Queen, ‘the monarchy!’

“‘Better that, Madame, than running the risk, as I did some hours since, of seeing you and my children sacrificed!’

“‘That, Sire, will be the consequence of our not having left Versailles. Whatever you determine, it is my duty to obey. As to myself, I am resigned to my fate.’ On this she burst into a flood of tears. ‘I only feel for your humiliated state, and for the safety of our children.’

“The Royal Family departed without having consulted any of the Ministers, military or civil, or the National Assembly, by whom they were followed.

“Scarcely had they arrived at Paris when the Queen recollected that she had taken with her no change of dress, either for herself or her children, and they were obliged to ask permission of the National Assembly to allow them to send for their different wardrobes.

“What a situation for an absolute King and Queen, which, but a few hours previous, they had been!

“I now took up my residence with Their Majesties at the Tuileries,—that odious Tuileries, which I can not name but with horror, where the malignant spirit of rebellion has, perhaps, dragged us to an untimely death!

“Monsieur and Madame had another residence. Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, and La Fayette became the royal jailers.

“The Princesse Elizabeth and myself could not but deeply deplore, when we saw the predictions of Dumourier so dreadfully confirmed by the result, that Her Majesty should have so slighted his timely information, and scorned his penitence. But delicacy bade us lament in silence; and, while we grieved over her present sufferings, we could not but mourn the loss of a barrier against future aggression, in the rejection of this general’s proffered services.

“It will be remembered, that Dumourier in his disclosure declared that the object of this commotion was to place the Duc d’Orleans upon the throne, and that Mirabeau, who was a prime mover, was to share in the profits of the usurpation.[32]

“Soon after this event, Her Majesty, in tears, came to tell me that the King, having had positive proof of the agency of the Duc d’Orleans in the riots of Versailles, had commenced some proceedings, which had given the Duke the alarm, and exiled him to Villers-Cotterets. The Queen added that the King’s only object had been to assure the general tranquillity, and especially her own security, against whose life the conspiracy seemed most distinctly levelled.

[32] *But the heart of the traitor Duke failed him at the important crisis. Though he was said to have been recognised through a vulgar disguise, stimulating the assassins to the attempted murder of Her Majesty, yet, when the moment to show himself had arrived, he was nowhere to be found. The most propitious moment for the execution of the foul crime was lost, and with it the confidence of his party. Mirabeau was disgusted. So far from wishing longer to offer him the crown, he struck it forever from his head, and turned against him. He openly protested he would no longer set up traitors who were cowards*

“‘Oh, Princess!’ continued Her Majesty, in a flood of tears, ‘the King’s love for me, and his wish to restore order to his people, have been our ruin! He should have struck off the head of D’ORLEANS, or overlooked his crime! Why did he not consult me before he took a step so important? I have lost a friend also in his wife! For, however criminal he may be, she loves him.’

“I assured Her Majesty that I could not think the Duchesse d’Orleans would be so inconsiderate as to withdraw her affection on that account.

“‘She certainly will,’ replied Marie Antoinette. ‘She is the affectionate mother of his children, and cannot but hate those who have been the cause of his exile. I know it will be laid to my charge, and added to the hatred the husband has so long borne me; I shall now become the object of the wife’s resentment.’

“In the midst of one of the paroxysms of Her Majesty’s agonising agitation after leaving Versailles, for the past, the present, and the future state of the Royal Family, when the Princesse Elizabeth and myself were in vain endeavouring to calm her, a deputation was announced from the National Assembly and the City of Paris, requesting the honour of the appearance of the King and herself at the theatre.

“‘Is it possible, my dear Princess,’ cried she, on the announcement, ‘that I can enjoy any public amusement while I am still chilled with horror at the blood these people have spilled, the blood of the faithful defenders of our lives? I can forgive them, but I cannot so easily forget it.’

“Count Fersen and the Austrian Ambassador now entered, both anxious to know Her Majesty’s intentions with regard to visiting the theatre, in order to make a party to ensure her a good reception; but all their persuasions were unavailing. She thanked the deputation for their friendship; but at the same time told them that her mind was still too much agitated from recent scenes to receive any pleasure but in the domestic cares of her family, and that, for a time, she must decline every other amusement.

“At this moment the Spanish and English Ambassadors came to pay their respects to Her Majesty on the same subject as the others. As they entered, Count Fersen observed to the Queen, looking around:

“‘Courage, Madame! We are as many nations as persons in this room—English, German, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, and French; and all equally ready to form a rampart around you against aggression. All these nations will, I believe, admit that the French (bowing to the Princesse Elizabeth) are the most volatile of the six; and Your Majesty may rely on it that they will love you, now that you are more closely among them, more tenderly than ever.’

“‘Let me live to be convinced of that, monsieur, and my happiness will be concentrated in its demonstration.’

“‘Indeed, gentlemen,’ said the Princesse Elizabeth, the Queen has yet had but little reason to love the French.’

“‘Where is our Ambassador,’ said I, ‘and the Neapolitan?’

“‘I have had the pleasure of seeing them early this morning,’ replied the Queen; ‘but I told them, also, that indisposition prevented my going into public. They will be at our card-party in your apartment this evening, where I hope to see these gentlemen. The only parties,’ continued Her Majesty, addressing herself to the Princesse Elizabeth and the Ambassadors, ‘the only parties I shall visit in future will be those of the Princesse de Lamballe, my

superintendent; as, in so doing, I shall have no occasion to go out of the palace, which, from what has happened, seems to me the only prudent course.'

"'Come, come, Madame,' exclaimed the Ambassadors; I do not give way to gloomy ideas. All will yet be well.'

"'I hope so,' answered Her Majesty; 'but till that hope is realized, the wounds I have suffered will make existence a burden to me!'

"The Duchesse de Luynes, like many others, had been a zealous partisan of the new order of things, and had expressed herself with great indiscretion in the presence of the Queen. But the Duchess was brought to her senses when she saw herself, and all the mad, democratical nobility, under the overpowering weight of Jacobinism, deprived of every privileged prerogative and levelled and stripped of hereditary distinction.

"She came to me one day, weeping, to beg I would make use of my good offices in her favour with the Queen, whom she was grieved that she had so grossly offended by an unguarded speech.

"'On my knees,' continued the Duchess, I am I ready to supplicate the pardon of Her Majesty. I cannot live without her forgiveness. One of my servants has opened my eyes, by telling me that the Revolution can make a Duchess a beggar, but cannot make a beggar a Duchess.'

"'Unfortunately,' said I, 'if some of these faithful servants had been listened to, they would still be such, and not now our masters; but I can assure you, Duchess, that the Queen has long since forgiven you. See! Her Majesty comes to tell you so herself.'

"The Duchess fell upon her knees. The Queen, with her usual goodness of heart, clasped her in her arms, and, with tears in her eyes, said:

"'We have all of us need of forgiveness. Our errors and misfortunes are general. Think no more of the past; but let us unite in not sinning for the future:

"'Heaven knows how many sins I have to atone for,' replied the Duchess, 'from the follies of youth; but now, at an age of discretion and in adversity, oh, how bitterly do I reproach myself for my past levities! But,' continued she, 'has Your Majesty really forgiven me?'

"'As I hope to be forgiven!' exclaimed Marie Antoinette. 'No penitent in the sight of God is more acceptable than the one who makes a voluntary sacrifice by confessing error. Forget and forgive is the language of our Blessed Redeemer. I have adopted it in regard to my enemies, and surely my friends have a right to claim it. Come, Duchess, I will conduct you to the King and Elizabeth, who will rejoice in the recovery of one of our lost sheep; for we sorely feel the diminution of the flock that once surrounded us!'

"At this token of kindness, the Duchess was so much overcome that she fell at the Queen's feet motionless, and it was some time before she recovered.

"From the moment of Her Majesty's arrival at Paris from Versailles, she solely occupied herself with the education of her children,-excepting when she resorted to my parties, the only ones, as she had at first determined, which she ever honoured with her attendance. In order to discover, as far as possible, the sentiments of certain persons, I gave almost general invitations, whereby, from her amiable manners and gracious condescension, she became very popular. By these means I hoped to replace Her Majesty in the good estimation of her numerous visitors; but, notwithstanding every exertion, she could not succeed in dispelling the gloom with which the Revolution had overcast all her former gaiety. Though treated with ceremonious respect, she missed the cordiality to which she had been so long accustomed,

and which she so much prized. From the great emigration of the higher classes of the nobility, the societies themselves were no longer what they had been. Madame Necker and Madame de Stael were pretty regular visitors. But the most agreeable company had lost its zest for Marie Antoinette; and she was really become afraid of large assemblies, and scarcely ever saw a group of persons collected together without fearing some plot against the King.

“Indeed, it is a peculiarity which has from the first marked, and still continues to distinguish, the whole conduct and distrust of my royal mistress, that it never operates to create any fears for herself, but invariably refers to the safety of His Majesty.

“I had enlarged my circle and made my parties extensive, solely to relieve the oppressed spirits of the Queen; but the very circumstance which induced me to make them so general soon rendered them intolerable to her; for the conversations at last became solely confined to the topics of the Revolution, a subject frequently the more distressing from the presence of the sons of the Duc d’Orleans. Though I loved my sister-in-law and my nephews, I could not see them without fear, nor could my royal mistress be at ease with them, or in the midst of such distressing indications as perpetually intruded upon her, even beneath my roof, of the spirit which animated the great body of the people for the propagation of anti-monarchical principles.

“My parties were, consequently, broken up; and the Queen ceased to be seen in society. Then commenced the unconquerable power over her of those forebodings which have clung to her with such pertinacity ever since.

“I observed that Her Majesty would often indulge in the most melancholy predictions long before the fatal discussion took place in the Assembly respecting the King’s abdication. The daily insolence with which she saw His Majesty’s authority deprived forever of the power of accomplishing what he had most at heart for the good of his people gave her more anguish than the outrages so frequently heaped upon herself; but her misery was wrought up to a pitch altogether unutterable, whenever she saw those around her suffer for their attachment to her in her misfortunes.

“The Princesse Elizabeth has been from the beginning an unwavering comforter. She still flatters Marie Antoinette that Heaven will spare her for better times to reward our fidelity and her own agonies. The pious consolations of Her Highness have never failed to make the most serious impression on our wretched situation. Indeed, each of us strives to pour the balm of comfort into the wounded hearts of the others, while not one of us, in reality, dares to flatter herself with what we all so ardently wish for in regard to our fellow-sufferers. Delusions, even sustained by facts, have long since been exhausted. Our only hope on this side of the grave is in our all-merciful Redeemer!”

Section 7. Editors Commentary

The reader will not, I trust, be dissatisfied at reposing for a moment from the sad story of the Princesse de Lamballe to hear some ridiculous circumstances which occurred to me individually; and which, though they form no part of the history, are sufficiently illustrative of the temper of the times.

I had been sent to England to put some letters into the postoffice for the Prince de Conde, and had just returned. The fashion then in England was a black dress, Spanish hat, and yellow satin lining, with three ostrich feathers forming the Prince of Wales's crest, and bearing his inscription, 'Ich dien,' ("I serve.") I also brought with me a white satin cloak, trimmed with white fur. This crest and motto date as far back, I believe, as the time of Edward, the Black Prince.

In this dress, I went to the French opera. Scarcely was I seated in the bog, when I heard shouts of, "En bas les couleurs de d'empereur! En bas!"

I was very busy talking to a person in the box, and, having been accustomed to hear and see partial riots in the pit, I paid no attention; never dreaming that my poor hat and feathers, and cloak, were the cause of the commotion, till an officer in the national guard very politely knocked at the door of the box, and told me I must either take them off or leave the theatre.

There is nothing I more dislike than the being thought particular, or disposed to attract attention by dress. The moment, therefore, I found myself thus unintentionally the object of a whole theatre's disturbance, in the first impulse of indignation, I impetuously caught off the cloak and hat, and flung them into the pit, at the very faces of the rioters.

The theatre instantly rang with applause. The obnoxious articles were carefully folded up and taken to the officer of the guard, who, when I left the box, at the end of the opera, brought them to me and offered to assist me in putting them on; but I refused them with true cavalier-like loftiness, and entered my carriage without either hat or cloak.

There were many of the audience collected round the carriage at the time, who, witnessing my rejection of the insulted colours, again loudly cheered me; but insisted on the officer's placing the hat and cloak in the carriage, which drove off amidst the most violent acclamations.

Another day, as I was going to walk in the Tuileries (which I generally did after riding on horseback), the guards crossed their bayonets at the gate and forbade my entering. I asked them why. They told me no one was allowed to walk there without the national ribbon.

Now, I always had one of these national ribbons about me, from the time they were first worn; but I kept it in the inside of my riding-habit; and on that day, in particular, my supply was unusually ample, for I had on a new riding-habit, the petticoat of which was so very long and heavy that I bought a large quantity to tie round my waist, and fasten up the dress, to prevent it from falling about my feet.

However, I was determined to plague the guards for their impudence. My English beau, who was as pale as death, and knew I had the ribbon, kept pinching my arm, and whispering, "Show it, show it; zounds, madame, show it! We shall be sent to prison! show it! show it!" But I took care to keep my interrupters in parley till a sufficient mob was collected, and then I produced my colours.

The soldiers were consequently most gloriously hissed, and would have been maltreated by the mob, and sent to the guard-house by their officer, but for my intercession; on which I was again applauded all through the gardens as La Brave Anglaise. But my beau declared he would never go out with me again: unless I wore the ribbon on the outside of my hat, which I never did and never would do.

At that time the Queen used to occupy herself much in fancy needle-works. Knowing, from arrangements, that I was every day in a certain part of the Tuileries, Her Majesty, when she heard the shout of La Brave Anglaise! immediately called the Princesse de Lamballe to know if she had sent me on any message. Being answered in the negative, one of the pages was despatched to ascertain the meaning of the cry. The Royal Family lived in so continual a state of alarm that it was apprehended I had got into some scrape; but I had left the Tuileries before the messenger arrived, and was already with the Princesse de Lamballe, relating the circumstances. The Princess told Her Majesty, who graciously observed, “I am very happy that she got off so well; but caution her to be more prudent for the future. A cause, however bad, is rather aided than weakened by unreasonable displays of contempt for it. These unnecessary excitements of the popular jealousy do us no good.”

I was, of course, severely reprimanded by the Princess for my frolic, though she enjoyed it of all things, and afterwards laughed most heartily.

The Princess told me, a few days after these circumstances of the national ribbon and the Austrian colours had taken place at the theatre, that some one belonging to the private correspondence at the palace had been at the French opera on the night the disturbance took place there, and, without knowing the person to whom it related, had told the whole story to the King.

The Queen and the Princesses Elizabeth and de Lamballe being present, laughed very heartily. The two latter knew it already from myself, the fountain head, but the Princesse Elizabeth said:

“Poor lady! what a fright she must have been in, to have had her things taken away from her at the theatre.”

“No fright at all,” said the King; “for a young woman who could act thus firmly under such an insolent outrage will always triumph over cowards, unmanly enough to abuse their advantages by insulting her. She was not a Frenchwoman, I’ll answer for it.”

“Oh, no, Sire. She is an Englishwoman,” said the Princesse de Lamballe.

“I am glad of it,” exclaimed the King; “for when she returns to England this will be a good personal specimen for the information of some of her countrymen, who have rejoiced at what they call the regeneration of the French nation; a nation once considered the most polished in Europe, but now become the most uncivil, and I wish I may never have occasion to add, the most barbarous! An insult offered, wantonly, to either sex, at any time, is the result of insubordination; but when offered to a woman, it is a direct violation of civilised hospitality, and an abuse of power which never before tarnished that government now so much the topic of abuse by the enemies of order and legitimate authority. The French Princes, it is true, have been absolute; still I never governed despotically, but always by the advice of my counsellors and Cabinet Ministers. If they have erred, my conscience is void of reproach. I wish the National Assembly may govern for the future with equal prudence, equity, and justice; but they have given a poor earnest in pulling down one fabric before they have laid the solid foundation of another. I am very happy that their agents, who, though they call themselves the guardians of public order have hitherto destroyed its course, have, in the courage of this

English lady, met with some resistance to their insolence, in foolishly occupying themselves with petty matters, while those of vital import are totally neglected."

It is almost superfluous to mention that, at the epoch of which I am speaking in the Revolution, the Royal Family were in so much distrust of every one about them, and very necessarily and justly so, that none were ever confided in for affairs, however trifling, without first having their fidelity repeatedly put to the test. I was myself under this probation long before I knew that such had ever been imposed.

With the private correspondence I had already been for some time entrusted; and it was only previous to employing me on secret missions of any consequence that I was subject to the severer scrutiny. Even before I was sent abroad, great art was necessary to elude the vigilance of prying eyes in the royal circle; and, in order to render my activity available to important purposes, my connection with the Court was long kept secret. Many stratagems were devised to mislead the Arguses of the police. To this end, after the disorders of the Revolution began, I never entered the palaces but on an understood signal, for which I have been often obliged to attend many hours in the gardens of Versailles, as I had subsequently done in that of the Tuileries.

To pass the time unnoticed, I used generally to take a book, and seat myself, occupied in reading, sometimes in one spot, sometimes in another; but with my man and maid servant always within call, though never where they could be seen.

On one of these occasions, a person, though not totally masked yet sufficiently disguised to prevent my recognising his features, came behind my seat, and said he wished to speak to me. I turned round and asked his business.

"That's coming to the point!" he answered. "Walk a little way with me, and I will tell you."

Not to excite suspicion, I walked into a more retired part of the garden, after a secret signal to my man servant, who followed me unperceived by the stranger.

"I am commissioned," said my mysterious companion, "to make you a very handsome present, if you will tell me what you are waiting for."

I laughed, and was turning from him, saying, "Is this all your business?"

"No," he replied.

"Then keep it to yourself. I am not waiting here for any one or anything; but am merely occupied in reading and killing time to the best advantage."

"Are you a poetess?"

"No."

"And scarcely a woman; for your answers are very short."

"Very likely."

"But I have something of importance to communicate——-"

"That is impossible."

"But listen to me——-"

"You are mistaken in your person."

"But surely you will not be so unreasonable as not to hear what I have to say?"

"I am a stranger in this country, and can have nothing of importance with one I do not know."

“You have quarrelled with your lover and are in an ill-humour.

“Perhaps so. Well! come! I believe you have guessed the cause.”

“Ah! it is the fate of us all to get into scrapes! But you will soon make it up; and now let me entreat your attention to what I have to offer.”

I became impatient, and called my servant.

“Madame,” resumed the stranger, “I am a gentleman, and mean no harm. But I assure you, you stand in your own light. I know more about you than you think I do.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, madame, you are waiting here for an august personage.”

At this last sentence, my lips laughed, while my heart trembled.

“I wish to caution you,” continued he, “how you embark in plans of this sort.”

“Monsieur, I repeat, you have taken me for some other person. I will no longer listen to one who is either a maniac or an officious intruder.”

Upon this, the stranger bowed and left me; but I could perceive that he was not displeased with my answers, though I was not a little agitated, and longed to see Her Highness to relate to her this curious adventure.

In a few hours I did so. The Princess was perfectly satisfied with my manner of proceeding, only she thought it singular, she said, that the stranger should suspect I was there in attendance for some person of rank; and she repeated, three or four times, “I am heartily glad that you did not commit yourself by any decided answer. What sort of a man was he?”

“Very much of the gentleman; above the middle stature; and, from what I could see of his countenance, rather handsome than otherwise.”

“Was he a Frenchman?”

“No. I think he spoke good French and English, with an Irish accent.”

“Then I know who it is,” exclaimed she. “It is Dillon: I know it from some doubts which arose between Her Majesty, Dillon, and myself, respecting sending you upon a confidential mission. Oh, come hither! come hither!” continued Her Highness, overwhelming me with kisses. “How glad, how very glad I am, that the Queen will be convinced I was not deceived in what I told Her Majesty respecting you. Take no notice of what I am telling you; but he was sent from the Queen, to tempt you into some imprudence, or to be convinced, by your not falling into the snare, that she might rely on your fidelity.”

“What! doubt my fidelity?” said I.

“Oh, my dear, you must excuse Her Majesty. We live in critical times. You will be the more rewarded, and much more esteemed, for this proof of your firmness. Do you think you should know him, if you were to see him again?”

“Certainly, I should, if he were in the same disguise.

“That, I fear, will be rather difficult to accomplish. However, you shall go in your carriage and wait at the door of his sister, the Marquise of Desmond; where I will send for him to come to me at four o’clock to-morrow. In this way, you will have an opportunity of seeing him on horseback, as he always pays his morning visits riding.”

I would willingly have taken a sleeping draught, and never did I wait more anxiously than for the hour of four.

I left the Princess, and, in crossing from the Carrousel to go to the Place Vendome, it rained very fast, and there glanced by me, on horseback, the same military cloak in which the stranger had been wrapped. My carriage was driving so fast that I still remained in doubt as to the wearer's person.

Next day, however, as appointed, I repaired to the place of rendezvous; and I could almost have sworn, from the height of the person who alighted from his horse, that he was my mysterious questioner.

Still, I was not thoroughly certain. I watched the Princess coming out, and followed her carriage to the Champs Elysees and told her what I thought.

"Well," replied she, "we must think no more about it; nor must it ever be mentioned to him, should you by any chance meet him."

I said I should certainly obey Her Highness.

A guilty conscience needs no accuser. A few days after I was riding on horseback in the Bois de Boulogne, when Lord Edward Fitzgerald came up to speak to me. Dillon was passing at the time, and, seeing Lord Edward, stopped, took off his hat, and observed, "A very pleasant day for riding, madame!" Then, looking me full in the face, he added, "I beg your pardon, madame, I mistook you for another lady with whom Lord Edward is often in company."

I said there was no offence; but the moment I heard him speak I was no longer in doubt of his being the identical person.

When I had learnt the ciphering and deciphering, and was to be sent to Italy, the Queen acknowledged to the Princesse de Lamballe that she was fully persuaded I might be trusted, as she had good reason to know that my fidelity was not to be doubted or shaken.

Dear, hapless Princess! She said to me, in one of her confidential conversations on these matters, "The Queen has been so cruelly deceived and so much watched that she almost fears her own shadow; but it gives me great pleasure that Her Majesty had been herself confirmed by one of her own emissaries in what I never for a moment doubted.

"But do not fancy," continued the Princess, laughing, "that you have had only this spy to encounter. Many others have watched your motions and your conversations, and all concur in saying you are the devil, and they could make nothing of you. But that, 'mia cara piccola diavolina', is just what we want!"

Section 8. Editor In Continuation

I am compelled, with reluctance, to continue personally upon the stage, and must do so for the three ensuing chapters, in order to put my readers in possession of circumstances explanatory of the next portion of the Journal of the Princesse de Lamballe.

Even the particulars I am about to mention can give but a very faint idea of the state of alarm in which the Royal Family lived, and the perpetual watchfulness and strange and involved expedients that were found necessary for their protection. Their most trifling communications were scrutinized with so much jealousy that when any of importance were to be made it required a dexterity almost miraculous to screen them from the ever-watchful eye of espionage.

I was often made instrumental in evading the curiosity of others, without ever receiving any clue to the gratification of my own, even had I been troubled with such impertinence. The anecdote I am about to mention will show how cautious a game it was thought necessary to play; and the result of my half-information will evince that over-caution may produce evils almost equal to total carelessness.

Some time previous to the flight of the Royal Family from Paris, the Princesse de Lamballe told me she wanted some repairs made to the locks of certain dressing and writing-desks; but she would prefer having them done at my apartments, and by a locksmith who lived at a distance from the palace.

When the boxes were repaired, I was sent with one of them to Lisle, where another person took charge of it for the Archduchess at Brussels.

There was something which strongly marked the kind-heartedness of the Princesse de Lamballe in a part of this transaction. I had left Paris without a passport, and Her Highness, fearing it might expose me to inconvenience, sent an express after me. The express arrived three hours before I did, and the person to whom I have alluded came out of Brussels in his carriage to meet me and receive the box. At the same time, he gave me a sealed letter, without any address. I asked him from whom he received it, and to whom it was to be delivered. He said he was only instructed to deliver it to the lady with the box, and he showed me the Queen’s cipher. I took the letter, and, after partaking of some refreshments, returned with it, according to my orders.

On my arrival at Paris, the Princesse de Lamballe told me her motive for sending the express, who, she said, informed her, on his return, that I had a letter for the Queen. I said it was more than I knew. “Oh, I suppose that is because the letter bears no address,” replied she; “but you were shown the cipher, and that is all which is necessary.”

She did not take the letter, and I could not help remarking how far, in this instance, the rigour of etiquette was kept up, even between these close friends. The Princess, not having herself received the letter, could not take it from my hands to deliver without Her Majesty’s express command. This being obtained, she asked me for it, and gave it to Her Majesty. The circumstance convinced me that the Princess exercised much less influence over the Queen, and was much more directed by Her Majesty’s authority, than has been imagined.

Two or three days after my arrival at Paris, my servant lost the key of my writing-desk, and, to remedy the evil, he brought me the same locksmith I had employed on the repairs just

mentioned. As it was necessary I should be present to remove my papers when the lock was taken off, of course I saw the man. While I was busy clearing the desk, with an air of great familiarity he said, “I have had jobs to do here before now, my girl, as your sweetheart there well knows.”

I humoured his mistake in taking me for my own maid and my servant’s sweetheart, and I pertly answered, “Very likely.”

“Oh, yes, I have,” said he; “it was I who repaired the Queen’s boxes in this very room.”

Knowing I had never received anything of the sort from Her Majesty, and utterly unaware that the boxes the Princess sent to my apartments had been the Queen’s, I was greatly surprised. Seeing my confusion, he said, “I know the boxes as well as I know myself. I am the King’s locksmith, my dear, and I and the King worked together many years. Why, I know every creek and corner of the palace, aye, and I know everything that’s going on in them, too—queer doings! Lord, my pretty damsel, I made a secret place in the palace to hide the King’s papers, where the devil himself would never find them out, if I or the King didn’t tell!”

Though I wished him at the devil every moment he detained me from disclosing his information at the palace, yet I played off the soubrette upon him till he became so interested I thought he never would have gone. At last, however, he took his departure, and the moment he disappeared, out of the house I flew.

The agitation and surprise of the Princess at what I related were extreme. “Wait,” cried she; “I must go and inform the Queen instantly.” In going out of the room, “Great God, what a discovery!” exclaimed Her Highness.

It was not long before she returned. Luckily, I was dressed for dinner. She took me by the hand and, unable to speak, led me to the private closet of the Queen.

Her Majesty graciously condescended to thank me for the letter I had taken charge of. She told me that for the future all letters to her would be without any superscription; and desired me, if any should be given to me by persons I had not before seen, and the cipher were shown at the same time, to receive and deliver them myself into her hands, as the production of the cipher would be a sufficient pledge of their authenticity.

Being desired to repeat the conversation with Gamin, “There, Princess!” exclaimed Her Majesty, “Am I not the crow of evil forebodings? I trust the King will never again be credulous enough to employ this man. I have long had an extreme aversion to His Majesty’s familiarity with him; but he shall hear his impudence himself from your own lips, my good little Englishwoman; and then he will not think it is prepossession or prejudice.”

A few evenings elapsed, and I thought no more of the subject, till one night I was ordered to the palace by the Princess, which never happened but on very particular occasions, as she was fearful of exciting suspicion by any appearance of close intimacy with one so much about Paris upon the secret embassies of the Court.

When I entered the apartment, the King, the Queen, and the Princesse Elizabeth were, as if by accident, in an adjoining room; but, from what followed, I am certain they all came purposely to hear my deposition. I was presently commanded to present myself to the august party.

The King was in deep conversation with the Princesse Elizabeth. I must confess I felt rather embarrassed. I could not form an idea why I was thus honoured. The Princesse de Lamballe graciously took me by the hand.

“Now tell His Majesty, yourself, what Gamin said to you.”

I began to revive, perceiving now wherefore I was summoned. I accordingly related, in the presence of the royal guests assembled, as I had done before Her Majesty and the Princesse de Lamballe, the scene as it occurred.

When I came to that part where he said, “where the devil himself could never find them out,” His Majesty approached from the balcony, at which he had been talking with the Princesse Elizabeth, and said, “Well! he is very right—but neither he nor the devil shall find them out, for they shall be removed this very night.”[33]

The King, the Queen, and the Princesse Elizabeth most graciously said, “Nous sommes bien obligis, ma petite anglaise!” and Her Majesty added, “Now, my dear, tell me all the rest about this man, whom I have long suspected for his wickedness.”

I said he had been guilty of no hostile indications, and that the chief fault I had to find with him was his exceeding familiarity in mentioning himself before the King, saying, “I and the King.”

“Go on,” said Her Majesty; “give us the whole as it occurred, and let us form our own conclusions.”

“Yes,” cried the Princess, “parlate sciolto.”—“Si Si,” rejoined the Queen, “parlate tutto—yes, yes, speak out and tell us all.”

I then related the remainder of the conversation, which very much alarmed the royal party, and it was agreed that, to avoid suspicion, I should next day send for the locksmith and desire him, as an excuse, to look at the locks of my trunks and travelling carriage, and set off in his presence to take up my pretended mistress on the road to Calais, that he might not suspect I had any connection with any one about the Court. I was strictly enjoined by Her Majesty to tell him that the man servant had had the boxes from some one to get them repaired, without either my knowledge or that of my mistress, and, by her pretended orders, to give him a discharge upon the spot for having dared to use her apartments as a workshop for the business of other people.

“Now,” said the Princesse de Lamballe, “now play the comic part you acted between your servant and Gamin:” which I did, as well as I could recollect it, and the royal audience were so much amused, that I had the honour to remain in the room and see them play at cards. At length, however, there came three gentle taps at the outer door. “Ora a tempo perche vene andata,” exclaimed Her Highness at the sound, having ordered a person to call with this signal to see me out of the palace to the Rue Nicaise, where my carriage was in waiting to conduct me home.

It is not possible for me to describe the gracious condescension of the Queen and the Princesse Elizabeth, in expressing their sentiments for the accidental discovery I had made. Amid their assurances of tender interest and concern, they both reproved me mildly for my imprudence in having, when I went to Brussels, hurried from Paris without my passport. They gave me prudential cautions with regard to my future conduct and residence at Paris; and it was principally owing to the united persuasions and remonstrances of these three angels in human form that I took six or seven different lodgings, where the Princesse de Lamballe used to meet me by turns; because had I gone often to the palace, as many others did, or waited for Her Highness regularly in any one spot, I should, infallibly, have been discovered.

[33] *Which was done; and these are, therefore, no doubt, the papers and portfolio of which Madame Campan speaks, vol. ii., p. 142, as having been entrusted to her care after being taken from their hiding-place by the King himself.*

“Gracious God!” exclaimed Her Majesty in the course of this conversation, “am I born to be the misfortune of every one who shows an interest in serving me? Tell my sister, when you return to Brussels again—and do not forget to say I desired you to tell her—our cruel situation! She does not believe that we are surrounded by enemies, even in our most private seclusions! in our prison! that we are even thrown exclusively upon foreigners in our most confidential affairs; that in France there is scarcely an individual to whom we can look! They betray us for their own safety, which is endangered by any exertions in our favour. Tell her this,” repeated the Queen three or four times.

The next day I punctually obeyed my orders. Gamin was sent for to look at the locks, and received six francs for his opinion. The man servant was reproved by me on behalf of my supposed mistress, and, in the presence of Gamin, discharged for having brought suspicious things into the house.

The man being tutored in his part, begged Gamin to plead for my intercession with our mistress. I remained inexorable, as he knew I should. While Gamin was still by I discharged the bill at the house, got into my carriage, and took the road towards Calais.

At Saint Denis, however, I feigned to be taken ill, and in two days returned to Paris.

Even this simple act required management. I contrived it in the following manner. I walked out on the high road leading to the capital for the purpose of meeting my servant at a place which had been fixed for the meeting before I left Paris. I found him on horseback at his post, with a carriage prepared for my return. As soon as I was out of sight he made the best of his way forward, went to the inn with a note from me, and returned with my carriage and baggage I had to lodgings at Passy.

The joy of the Princess on seeing me safe again brought tears into her eyes; and, when I related the scene I played off before Gamin against my servant, she laughed most heavily. “But surely,” said she, “you have not really discharged the poor man?”—“Oh, no,” replied I; “he acted his part so well before the locksmith, that I should be very sorry to lose such an apt scholar.”

“You must perform this ‘buffa scena’,” observed Her Highness, “to the Queen. She has been very anxious to know the result; but her spirits are so depressed that I fear she will not come to my party this evening. However, if she do not, I will see her to-morrow, and you shall make her laugh. It would be a charity, for she has not done so from the heart for many a day!”

Section 9. Editor In Continuation

Every one who has read at all is familiar with the immortal panegyric of the great Edmund Burke upon Marie Antoinette. It is known that this illustrious man was not mean enough to flatter; yet his eloquent praises of her as a Princess, a woman, and a beauty, inspiring something beyond what any other woman could excite, have been called flattery by those who never knew her; those who did, must feel them to be, if possible, even below the truth. But the admiration of Mr. Burke was set down even to a baser motive, and, like everything else, converted into a source of slander for political purposes, long before that worthy palladium of British liberty had even thought of interesting himself for the welfare of France, which his prophetic eye saw plainly was the common cause of all Europe.

But, keenly as that great statesman looked into futurity, little did he think, when he visited the Queen in all her splendour at Trianon, and spoke so warmly of the cordial reception he had met with at Versailles from the Duc and Duchesse de Polignac, that he should have so soon to deplore their tragic fate!

Could his suggestions to Her Majesty, when he was in France, have been put in force, there is scarcely a doubt that the Revolution might have been averted, or crushed. But he did not limit his friendship to personal advice. It is not generally known that the Queen carried on, through the medium of the Princesse de Lamballe, a very extensive correspondence with Mr. Burke. He recommended wise and vast plans; and these, if possible, would have been adopted. The substance of some of the leading ones I can recall from the journal of Her Highness and letters which I have myself frequently deciphered. I shall endeavour, succinctly, to detail such of them as I remember.

Mr. Burke recommended the suppression of all superfluous religious institutions, which had not public seminaries to support. Their lands, he advised, should be divided, without regard to any distinction but that of merit, among such members of the army and other useful classes of society, as, after having served the specified time, should have risen, through their good conduct, to either civil or military preferment. By calculations upon the landed interest, it appeared that every individual under the operation of this bounty would, in the course of twenty years, possess a yearly income of from five to seven hundred francs.

Another of the schemes suggested by Mr. Burke was to purge the kingdom of all the troops which had been corrupted from their allegiance by the intrigues growing out of the first meeting of the Notables. He proposed that they should sail at the same time, or nearly so, to be colonized in the different French islands and Madagascar; and, in their place, a new national guard created, who should be bound to the interest of the legitimate Government by receiving the waste crown lands to be shared among them, from the common soldier to its generals and Field-marshals. Thus would the whole mass of rebellious blood have been reformed. To ensure an effectual change, Mr. Burke advised the enrolment, in rotation, of sixty thousand Irish troops, twenty thousand always to remain in France, and forty thousand in reversion for the same service. The lynx-eyed statesman saw clearly, from the murders of the Marquis de Launay and M. Flesselles, and from the destruction of the Bastille, and of the

ramparts of Paris, that party had not armed itself against Louis, but against the throne. It was therefore necessary to produce a permanent revolution in the army.[34]

There was another suggestion to secure troops around the throne of a more loyal temper. It was planned to incorporate all the French soldiers, who had not voluntarily deserted the royal standard, with two-thirds of Swiss, German, and Low Country forces, among whom were to be divided, after ten years' service, certain portions of the crown lands, which were to be held by presenting every year a flag of acknowledgment to the King and Queen; with the preference of serving in the civil or military departments, according to the merit or capacity of the respective individuals. Messieurs de Broglie, de Bouille, de Luxembourg, and others, were to have been commanders. But this plan, like many others, was foiled in its birth, and, it is said, through the intrigues of Mirabeau.

However, all concurred in the necessity of ridding France, upon the most plausible pretexts, of the fomenters of its ruin. Now arose a fresh difficulty. Transports were wanted, and in considerable numbers.

A navy agent in England was applied to for the supply of these transports. So great was the number required, and so peculiar the circumstances, that the agent declined interfering without the sanction of his Government.

A new dilemma succeeded. Might not the King of England place improper constructions on this extensive shipment of troops from the different ports of France for her West India possessions? Might it not be fancied that it involved secret designs on the British settlements in that quarter?

All these circumstances required that some communication should be opened with the Court of St. James; and the critical posture of affairs exacted that such communication should be less diplomatic than confidential.

It will be recollected that, at the very commencement of the reign of Louis XVI., there were troubles in Britanny, which the severe governorship of the Duc d'Aiguillon augmented. The Bretons took privileges with them, when they became blended with the kingdom of France, by the marriage of Anne of Brittany with Charles VIII., beyond those of any other of its provinces. These privileges they seemed rather disposed to extend than relinquish, and were by no means reserved in the expression of their resolution. It was considered expedient to place a firm, but conciliatory, Governor over them, and the Duc de Penthievre was appointed to this difficult trust. The Duke was accompanied to his vice-royalty by his daughter-in-law, the Princesse de Lamballe, who, by her extremely judicious management of the female part of the province, did more for the restoration of order than could have been achieved by

[34] *Mr. Burke was too great a statesman not to be the friend of his country's interest. He also saw that, from the destruction of the monarchy in France, England had more to fear than to gain. He well knew that the French Revolution was not, like that of the Americans, founded on grievances and urged in support of a great and disinterested principle. He was aware that so restless a people, when they had overthrown the monarchy, would not limit the overthrow to their own country. After Mr. Burke's death, Mr. Fox was applied to, and was decidedly of the same opinion. Mr. Sheridan was interrogated, and, at the request of the Princesse de Lamballe, he presented, for the Queen's inspection, plans nearly equal to those of the above two great statesmen; and what is most singular and scarcely credible is that one and all of the opposition party in England strenuously exerted themselves for the upholding of the monarchy in France. Many circumstances which came to my knowledge before and after the death of Louis XVI. prove that Mr. Pitt himself was averse to the republican principles being organized so near a constitutional monarchy as France was to Great Britain. Though the conduct of the Duc d'Orleans was generally reprobated, I firmly believe that if he had possessed sufficient courage to have usurped the crown and re-established the monarchy, he would have been treated with in preference to the republicans. I am the more confirmed in this opinion by a conversation between the Princesse de Lamballe and Mirabeau, in which he said a republic in France would never thrive.*

armies. The remembrance of this circumstance induced the Queen to regard Her Highness as a fit person to send secretly to England at this very important crisis; and the purpose was greatly encouraged by a wish to remove her from a scene of such daily increasing peril.

For privacy, it was deemed expedient that Her Highness should withdraw to Aumale, under the plea of ill-health, and thence proceed to England; and it was also by way of Aumale that she as secretly returned, after the fatal disaster of the stoppage, to discourage the impression of her ever having been out of France.

The mission was even unknown to the French Minister at the Court of St. James.

The Princess was ordered by Her Majesty to cultivate the acquaintance of the late Duchess of Gordon, who was supposed to possess more influence than any woman in England—in order to learn the sentiments of Mr. Pitt relative to the revolutionary troubles. The Duchess, however, was too much of an Englishwoman, and Mr. Pitt too much interested in the ruin of France, to give her the least clue to the truth.

In order to fathom the sentiments of the opposition party, the Princess cultivated the society also of the late Duchess of Devonshire, but with as little success. The opposition party foresaw too much risk in bringing anything before the house to alarm the prejudices of the nation.

The French Ambassador, too, jealous of the unexplained purpose of the Princess, did all he could to render her expedition fruitless.

Nevertheless, though disappointed in some of her main objects with regard to influence and information, she became so great a favourite at the British Court that she obtained full permission of the King and Queen of England to signify to her royal mistress and friend that the specific request she came to make would be complied with.[35]

In the meantime, however, the troubles in France were so rapidly increasing from hour to hour, that it became impossible for the Government to carry any of their plans into effect. This particular one, on the very eve of its accomplishment, was marred, as it was imagined, by the secret intervention of the friends of Mirabeau. The Government became more and more infirm and wavering in its purposes; the Princess was left without instructions, and under such circumstances as to expose her to the supposition of having trifled with the good-will of Their Majesties of England.

In this dilemma I was sent off from England to the Queen of France. I left Her Highness at Bath, but when I returned she had quitted Bath for Brighton. I am unacquainted with the

[35] *The Princess visited Bath, Windsor, Brighton, and many other parts of England, and associated with all parties. She managed her conduct so judiciously that the real object of her visit was never suspected. In all these excursions I had the honour to attend her confidentially. I was the only person entrusted with papers from Her Highness to Her Majesty. I had many things to copy, of which the originals went to France. Twice during the term of Her Highness's residence in England I was sent by Her Majesty with papers communicating the result of the secret mission to the Queen of Naples. On the second of these two trips, being obliged to travel night and day, I could only keep my eyes open by means of the strongest coffee. When I reached my destination I was immediately compelled to decipher the despatches with the Queen of Naples in the office of the Secretary of State. That done, General Acton ordered some one, I know not whom, to conduct me, I know not where, but it was to a place where, after a sound sleep of twenty-four hours, I awoke thoroughly refreshed, and without a vestige of fatigue either of mind or body. On waking, lest anything should transpire, I was desired to quit Naples instantly, without seeing the British Minister. To make assurance doubly sure, General Acton sent a person from his office to accompany me out of the city on horseback; and, to screen me from the attack of robbers, this person went on with me as far as the Roman frontier.*

nature of all the papers she received, but I well remember the agony they seemed to inflict on her. She sent off a packet by express that very night to Windsor.

The Princess immediately began the preparations for her return. Her own journal is explicit on this point of her history, and therefore I shall leave her to speak for herself. I must not, however, omit to mention the remark she made to me upon the subject of her reception in Great Britain. With these, let me dismiss the present chapter.

“The general cordiality with which I have been received in your country,” said Her Highness, “has made a lasting impression upon my heart. In particular, never shall I forget the kindness of the Queen of England, the Duchess of Devonshire, and her truly virtuous mother, Lady Spencer. It gave me a cruel pang to be obliged to undervalue the obligations with which they overwhelmed me by leaving England as I did, without giving them an opportunity of carrying their good intentions, which, I had myself solicited, into effect. But we cannot command fate. Now that the King has determined to accept the Constitution (and you know my sentiments upon the article respecting ecclesiastics), I conceive it my duty to follow Their Majesties’ example in submitting to the laws of the nation. Be assured, ‘Inglesina’, it will be my ambition to bring about one of the happiest ages of French history. I shall endeavour to create that confidence so necessary for the restoration to their native land of the Princes of the blood, and all the emigrants who abandoned the King, their families, and their country, while doubtful whether His Majesty would or would not concede this new charter; but now that the doubt exists no longer, I trust we shall all meet again, the happier for the privation to which we have been doomed from absence. As the limitation of the monarchy removes every kind of responsibility from the monarch, the Queen will again taste the blissful sweets she once enjoyed during the reign of Louis XV. in the domestic tranquillity of her home at Trianon. Often has she wept those times in which she will again rejoice. Oh, how I long for their return! I fly to greet the coming period of future happiness to us all!”

Postscript

Although I am not making myself the historian of France, yet it may not be amiss to mention that it was during this absence of Her Highness that Necker finally retired from power and from France.

The return of this Minister had been very much against the consent of Her Majesty and the King. They both feared what actually happened soon afterwards. They foresaw that he would be swept away by the current of popularity from his deference to the royal authority. It was to preserve the favour of the mob that he allowed them to commit the shocking murders of M. de Foulon (who had succeeded him on his first dismission as Minister of Louis XVI.) and of Berthier, his son-in-law. The union of Necker with D’ORLEANS, on this occasion, added to the cold indifference with which Barnave in one of his speeches expressed himself concerning the shedding of human blood, certainly animated the factious assassins to methodical murder, and frustrated all the efforts of La Fayette to save these victims from the enraged populace, to whom both unfortunately fell a sacrifice.

Necker, like La Fayette, when too late, felt the absurdity of relying upon the idolatry of the populace. The one fancied he could command the Parisian ‘poissardes’ as easily as his own battalions; and the other persuaded himself that the mob, which had been hired to carry about his bust, would as readily promulgate his theories.

But he forgot that the people in their greatest independence are only the puppets of demagogues; and he lost himself by not gaining over that class which, of all others, possesses most power over the million, I mean the men of the bar, who, arguing more logically than the rest of the world, felt that from the new Constitution the long robe was playing a losing game,

and therefore discouraged a system which offered nothing to their personal ambition or private emolument. Lawyers, like priests, are never over-ripe for any changes or innovations, except such as tend to their personal interest. The more perplexed the state of public and private affairs, the better for them. Therefore, in revolutions, as a body, they remain neuter, unless it is made for their benefit to act. Individually, they are a set of necessary evils; and, for the sake of the bar, the bench, and the gibbet, require to be humoured. But any legislator who attempts to render laws clear, concise, and explanatory, and to divest them of the quibbles whereby these expounders—or confounders—of codes fatten on the credulity of States and the miseries of unfortunate millions, will necessarily encounter opposition, direct or indirect, in every measure at all likely to reduce the influence of this most abominable horde of human depredators. It was Necker's error to have gone so directly to the point with the lawyers that they at once saw his scope; and thus he himself defeated his hopes of their support, the want of which utterly baffled all his speculations.[36]

When Necker undertook to re-establish the finances, and to reform generally the abuses in the Government, he was the most popular Minister (Lord Chatham, when the great Pitt, excepted) in Europe. Yet his errors were innumerable, though possessing such sound knowledge and judgment, such a superabundance of political contrivance, diplomatic coolness, and mathematical calculation, the result of deep thought aided by great practical experience.

But how futile he made all these appear when he declared the national bankruptcy. Could anything be more absurd than the assumption, by the individual, of a personal instead of a national guarantee of part of a national debt?—an undertaking too hazardous and by far too ambiguous, even for a monarch who is not backed by his kingdom—flow doubly frantic, then, for a subject! Necker imagined that the above declaration and his own Quixotic generosity would have opened the coffers of the great body of rich proprietors, and brought them forward to aid the national crisis. But he was mistaken. The nation then had no interest in his financial system. The effect it produced was the very reverse of what was expected. Every proprietor began to fear the ambition of the Minister, who undertook impossibilities. The being bound for the debts of an individual, and justifying bail in a court of law in commercial matters, affords no criterion for judging of, or regulating, the pecuniary difficulties of a nation. Necker's conduct in this case was, in my humble opinion, as impolitic as that of a man who, after telling his friends that he is ruined past redemption, asks for a loan of money. The conclusion is, if he obtains the loan, that "the fool and his money are soon parted."

It was during the same interval of Her Highness's stay in England, that the discontent ran so high between the people and the clergy.

I have frequently heard the Princesse de Lamballe ascribe the King's not sanctioning the decrees against the clergy to the influence of his aunt, the Carmelite nun, Madame Louise. During the life of her father, Louis XV., she nearly engrossed all the Church benefices by her intrigues. She had her regular conclaves of all orders of the Church. From the Bishop to the sexton, all depended on her for preferment; and, till the Revolution, she maintained equal power over the mind of Louis XVI. upon similar matters. The Queen would often express her disapprobation; but the King was so scrupulous, whenever the discussion fell on the topic of

[36] *The great Frederick of Prussia, on being told of the numbers of lawyers there were in England, said he wished he had them in his country. "Why?" some one enquired. "To do the greatest benefit in my power to society."—"How so?"—"Why to hang one-half as an example to the other!"*

religion, that she made it a point not to contrast her opinion with his, from a conviction that she was unequal to cope with him on that head, upon which he was generally very animated.

It is perfectly certain that the French clergy, by refusing to contribute to the exigencies of the State, created some of the primary horrors of the Revolution. They enjoyed one-third the national revenues, yet they were the first to withhold their assistance from the national wants. I have heard the Princesse de Lamballe say, “The Princesse Elizabeth and myself used our utmost exertion to induce some of the higher orders of the clergy to set the example and obtain for themselves the credit of offering up a part of the revenues, the whole of which we knew must be forfeited if they continued obstinate; but it was impossible to move them.”

The characters of some of the leading dignitaries of the time sufficiently explain their selfish and pernicious conduct; when churchmen trifle with the altar, be their motives what they may, they destroy the faith they possess, and give examples to the flock entrusted to their care, of which no foresight can measure the baleful consequences. Who that is false to his God can be expected to remain faithful to his Sovereign? When a man, as a Catholic Bishop, marries, and, under the mask of patriotism, becomes the declared tool of all work to every faction, and is the weathercock, shifting to any quarter according to the wind,—such a man can be of no real service to any party: and yet has a man of this kind been by turns the primum mobile of them all, even to the present times, and was one of those great Church fomenters of the troubles of which we speak, who disgraced the virtuous reign of Louis XVI.

Section 10

Amidst the perplexities of the Royal Family it was perfectly unavoidable that repeated proposals should have been made at various times for them to escape these dangers by flight. The Queen had been frequently and most earnestly entreated to withdraw alone; and the King, the Princesse Elizabeth, the Princesse de Lamballe, the royal children, with their little hands uplifted, and all those attached to Marie Antoinette, after the horrid business at Versailles, united to supplicate her to quit France and shelter herself from the peril hanging over her existence. Often and often have I heard the Princesse de Lamballe repeat the words in which Her Majesty uniformly rejected the proposition. “I have no wish,” cried the Queen, “for myself. My life or death must be encircled by the arms of my husband and my family. With them, and with them only, will I live or die.”

It would have been impossible to have persuaded her to leave France without her children. If any woman on earth could have been justified in so doing, it would have been Marie Antoinette. But she was above such unnatural selfishness, though she had so many examples to encourage her; for, even amongst the members of her own family, self-preservation had been considered paramount to every other consideration.

I have heard the Princess say that Pope Pius VI. was the only one of all the Sovereigns who offered the slightest condolence or assistance to Louis XVI. and his family. “The Pope’s letter,” added she, “when shown to me by the Queen, drew tears from my eyes. It really was in a style of such Christian tenderness and princely feeling as could only be dictated by a pious and illuminated head of the Christian Church. He implored not only all the family of Louis XVI., but even extended his entreaties to me [the Princesse de Lamballe] to leave Paris, and save themselves, by taking refuge in his dominions, from the horrors which so cruelly overwhelmed them. The King’s aunts were the only ones who profited by the invitation. Madame Elizabeth was to have been of the party, but could not be persuaded to leave the King and Queen.”

As the clouds grew more threatening, it is scarcely to be credited how many persons interested themselves for the same purpose, and what numberless schemes were devised to break the fetters which had been imposed on the Royal Family, by their jailers, the Assembly.

A party, unknown to the King and Queen, was even forming under the direction of the Princesse Elizabeth; but as soon as Their Majesties were apprised of it, it was given up as dangerous to the interests of the Royal Family, because it thwarted the plans of the Marquis de Bouille. Indeed, Her Majesty could never be brought to determine on any plan for her own or the King’s safety until their royal aunts, the Princesses Victoria and Adelaide, had left Paris.

The first attempt to fly was made early in the year 1791, at St. Cloud, where the horses had been in preparation nearly a fortnight; but the scheme was abandoned in consequence of having been entrusted to too many persons. This the Queen acknowledged. She had it often in her power to escape alone with her son, but would not consent.

The second attempt was made in the spring of the same year at Paris. The guards shut the gates of the Tuileries, and would not allow the King’s carriage to pass. Even though a large sum of money had been expended to form a party to overpower the mutineers, the

treacherous mercenaries did not appear. The expedition was, of course, obliged to be relinquished.

Many of the royal household were very ill-treated, and some lives unfortunately lost.

At last, the deplorable journey did take place. The intention had been communicated by Her Majesty to the Princesse de Lamballe before she went abroad, and it was agreed that, whenever it was carried into effect, the Queen should write to Her Highness from Montmedi, where the two friends were once more to have been reunited.

Soon after the departure of the Princess, the arrangements for the fatal journey to Varennes were commenced, but with blamable and fatal carelessness.

Mirabeau was the first person who advised the King to withdraw; but he recommended that it should be alone, or, at most, with the Dauphin only. He was of opinion that the overthrow of the Constitution could not be achieved while the Royal Family remained in Paris. His first idea was that the King should go to the sea-coast, where he would have it in his power instantly to escape to England, if the Assembly, through his (Mirabeau's), means, did not comply with the royal propositions. Though many of the King's advisers were for a distinct and open rejection of the Constitution, it was the decided impression of Mirabeau that he ought to stoop to conquer, and temporize by an instantaneous acceptance, through which he might gain time to put himself in an attitude to make such terms as would at once neutralize the act and the faction by which it was forced upon him. Others imagined that His Majesty was too conscientious to avail himself of any such subterfuge, and that, having once given his sanction, he would adhere to it rigidly. This third party of the royal counsellors were therefore for a cautious consideration of the document, clause by clause, dreading the consequences of an 'ex abrupto' signature in binding the Sovereign, not only against his policy, but his will.

In the midst of all these distracting doubts, however, the departure was resolved upon. Mirabeau had many interviews with the Count Fersen upon the subject. It was his great object to prevent the flight from being encumbered. But the King would not be persuaded to separate himself from the Queen and the rest of the family, and entrusted the project to too many advisers. Had he been guided by Fersen only, he would have succeeded.

The natural consequence of a secret being in so many hands was felt in the result. Those whom it was most important to keep in ignorance were the first on the alert. The weakness of the Queen in insisting upon taking a remarkable dressing-case with her, and, to get it away unobserved, ordering a facsimile to be made under the pretext of intending it as a present to her sister at Brussels, awakened the suspicion of a favourite, but false female attendant, then intriguing with the aide-de-camp of La Fayette. The rest is easily to be conceived. The Assembly were apprised of all the preparations for the departure a week or more before it occurred. La Fayette, himself, it is believed, knew and encouraged it, that he might have the glory of stopping the fugitive himself; but he was overruled by the Assembly.

When the secretary of the Austrian Ambassador came publicly, by arrangement, to ask permission of the Queen to take the model of the dressing-case in question, the very woman to whom I have alluded was in attendance at Her Majesty's toilet. The paramour of the woman was with her, watching the motions of the Royal Family on the night they passed from their own apartments to those of the Duc de Villequier in order to get into the carriage; and by this paramour was La Fayette instantly informed of the departure. The traitress discovered that Her Majesty was on the eve of setting off by seeing her diamonds packed up. All these things were fully known to the Assembly, of which the Queen herself was afterwards apprised by the Mayor of Paris.

In the suite of the Count Fersen there was a young Swede who had an intrigue purposely with one of the Queen's women, from whom he obtained many important disclosures relative to the times.[37]

The Swede mentioned this to his patron, who advised Her Majesty to discharge a certain number of these women, among whom was the one who afterwards proved her betrayer. It was suggested to dismiss a number at once, that the guilty person might not suspect the exclusion to be levelled against her in particular. Had the Queen allowed herself to be directed in this affair by Fersen, the chain of communication would have been broken, and the Royal Family would not have been stopped at Varennes, but have got clear out of France, many hours before they could have been perceived by the Assembly; but Her Majesty never could believe that she had anything to fear from the quarter against which she was warned.

It is not generally known that a very considerable sum had been given to the head recruiting sergeant, Mirabeau, to enlist such of the constituents as could be won with gold to be ready with a majority in favour of the royal fugitives. But the death of Mirabeau, previous to this event, leaves it doubtful how far he distributed the bribes conscientiously; indeed, it is rather to be questioned whether he did not retain the money, or much of it, in his own hands, since the strongly hoped for and dearly paid majority never gave proof of existence, either before or after the journey to Varennes. Immense bribes were also given to the Mayor of Paris, which proved equally ineffective.

Had Mirabeau lived till the affair of Varennes, it is not impossible that his genius might have given a different complexion to the result. He had already treated with the Queen and the Princess for a reconciliation; and in the apartments of Her Highness had frequent evening, and early morning, audiences of the Queen.

It is pretty certain, however, that the recantation of Mirabeau, from avowed democracy to aristocracy and royalty, through the medium of enriching himself by a 'salva regina', made his friends prepare for him that just retribution, which ended in a 'de profundis'. At a period when all his vices were called to aid one virtuous action, his thread of vicious life was shortened, and he; no doubt, became the victim of his insatiable avarice. That he was poisoned is not to be disproved; though it was thought necessary to keep it from the knowledge of the people.

I have often heard Her Highness say, "When I reflect on the precautions which were taken to keep the interviews with Mirabeau profoundly secret that he never conversed but with the King, the Queen, and myself—his untimely death must be attributed to his own indiscreet enthusiasm, in having confidentially entrusted the success with which he flattered himself, from the ascendency he had gained over the Court, to some one who betrayed him. His death, so very unexpectedly, and at that crisis, made a deep impression on the mind of the Queen. She really believed him capable of redressing the monarchy, and he certainly was the only one of the turncoat constitutionalists in whom she placed any confidence. Would to Heaven that she had had more in Barnave, and that she had listened to Dumourier! These I would have trusted more, far more readily than the mercenary Mirabeau!"

I now return, once more, to the journal of the Princess.

[37] *Alvise de Pisani, the last venetian Ambassador to the King, who was my husband's particular friend, and with whom I was myself long acquainted, and have been ever since to this day, as well as with all his noble family, during my many years' residence at Venice, told me this circumstance while walking with him at his country-seat at Stra, which was subsequently taken from him by Napoleon, and made the Imperial palace of the viceroy, and is now that of the German reigning Prince.*

Section 11

“In the midst of the perplexing debates upon the course most advisable with regard to the Constitution after the unfortunate return from Varennes, I sent off my little English amanuensis to Paris to bring me, through the means of another trusty person I had placed about the Queen, the earliest information concerning the situation of affairs. On her return she brought me a ring, which Her Majesty had graciously, condescended to send me, set with her own hair, which had whitened like that of a person of eighty, from the anguish the Varennes affair had wrought upon her mind; and bearing the inscription, ‘Bleached by sorrow.’ This ring was accompanied by the following letter:

“‘MY DEAREST FRIEND,—

“‘The King has made up his mind to the acceptance of the Constitution, and it will ere long be proclaimed publicly. A few days ago I was secretly waited upon and closeted in your apartment with many of our faithful friends,—in particular, Alexandre de Lameth, Duport, Barnave, Montmorin, Bertrand de Moleville, et cetera. The two latter opposed the King’s Council, the Ministers, and the numerous other advisers of an immediate and unscrutinizing acceptance. They were a small minority, and could not prevail with me to exercise my influence with His Majesty in support of their opinion, when all the rest seemed so confident that a contrary course must re-establish the tranquillity of the nation and our own happiness, weaken the party of the Jacobins against us, and greatly increase that of the nation in our favor.

“‘Your absence obliged me to call Elizabeth to my aid in managing the coming and going of the deputies to and from the Pavilion of Flora, unperceived by the spies of our enemies. She executed her charge so adroitly, that the visitors were not seen by any of the household. Poor Elizabeth! little did I look for such circumspection in one so unacquainted with the intrigues of Court, or the dangers surrounding us, which they would now fain persuade us no longer exist. God grant it may be so! and that I may once more freely embrace and open my heart to the only friend I have nearest to it. But though this is my most ardent wish, yet, my dear, dearest Lamballe, I leave it to yourself to act as your feelings dictate. Many about us profess to see the future as clear as the sun at noon-day. But, I confess, my vision is still dim. I cannot look into events with the security of others—who confound logic with their wishes. The King, Elizabeth, and all of us, are anxious for your return. But it would grieve us sorely for you to come back to such scenes as you have already witnessed. Judge and act from your own impressions. If we do not see you, send me the result of your interview at the precipice.—[The name the Queen gave to Mr. Pitt]—‘Vostra cara picciolca Inglesina’ will deliver you many letters. After looking over the envelopes, you will either send her with them as soon as possible or forward them as addressed, as you may think most advisable at the time you receive them.

"'Ever, ever, and forever,

"'Your affectionate,

"'MARIE ANTOINETTE!

“There was another hurried and abrupt note from Her Majesty among these papers, obviously written later than the first. It lamented the cruel privations to which she was doomed at the Tuileries, in consequence of the impeded flight, and declared that what the Royal Family

were forced to suffer, from being totally deprived of every individual of their former friends and attendants to condole with, excepting the equally oppressed and unhappy Princesse Elizabeth, was utterly insupportable.

“On the receipt of these much esteemed epistles, I returned, as my duty directed, to the best of Queens, and most sincere of friends. My arrival at Paris, though so much wished for, was totally unexpected.

“At our first meeting, the Queen was so agitated that she was utterly at a loss to explain the satisfaction she felt in beholding me once more near her royal person. Seeing the ring on my finger, which she had done me the honour of sending me, she pointed to her hair, once so beautiful, but now, like that of an old woman, not only gray, but deprived of all its softness, quite stiff and dried up.

“Madame Elizabeth, the King, and the rest of our little circle, lavished on me the most endearing caresses. The dear Dauphin said to me, ‘You will not go away again, I hope, Princess? Oh, mamma has cried so since you left us!’

“I had wept enough before, but this dear little angel brought tears into the eyes of us all.”

“When I mentioned to Her Majesty the affectionate sympathy expressed by the King and Queen of England in her sufferings, and their regret at the state of public affairs in France, ‘It is most noble and praiseworthy in them to feel thus,’ exclaimed Marie Antoinette; ‘and the more so considering the illiberal part imputed to us against those Sovereigns in the rebellion of their ultramarine subjects, to which, Heaven knows, I never gave my approbation. Had I done so, how poignant would be my remorse at the retribution of our own sufferings, and the pity of those I had so injured! No. I was, perhaps, the only silent individual amongst millions of infatuated enthusiasts at General La Fayette’s return to Paris, nor did I sanction any of the fetes given to Dr. Franklin, or the American Ambassadors at the time. I could not conceive it prudent for the Queen of an absolute monarchy to countenance any of their newfangled philosophical experiments with my presence. Now, I feel the reward in my own conscience. I exult in my freedom from a self-reproach, which would have been altogether insupportable under the kindness of which you speak.’

“As soon as I was settled in my apartment, which was on the same floor with that of the Queen, she condescended to relate to me every particular of her unfortunate journey. I saw the pain it gave her to retrace the scenes, and begged her to desist till time should have, in some degree, assuaged the poignancy of her feelings. ‘That,’ cried she, embracing me, I can never be! Never, never will that horrid circumstance of my life lose its vividness in my recollection. What agony, to have seen those faithful servants tied before us on the carriage, like common criminals! All, all may be attributed to the King’s goodness of heart, which produces want of courage, nay, even timidity, in the most trying scenes. As poor King Charles the First, when he was betrayed in the Isle of Wight, would have saved himself, and perhaps thousands, had he permitted the sacrifice of one traitor, so might Louis XVI. have averted calamities so fearful that I dare not name, though I distinctly foresee them, had he exerted his authority where he only called up his compassion.’

“‘For Heaven’s sake,’ replied I, ‘do not torment yourself by these cruel recollections!’

“‘These are gone by,’ continued Her Majesty, and greater still than even these. How can I describe my grief at what I endured in the Assembly, from the studied humiliation to which the King and the royal authority were there reduced in the face of the national representatives! from seeing the King on his return choked with anguish at the mortifications to which I was doomed to behold the majesty of a French Sovereign humbled! These events bespeak clouds, which, like the horrid waterspout at sea, nothing can dispel but cannon! The

dignity of the Crown, the sovereignty itself, is threatened; and this I shall write this very night to the Emperor. I see no hope of internal tranquillity without the powerful aid of foreign force.[38]

The King has allowed himself to be too much led to attempt to recover his power through any sort of mediation. Still, the very idea of owing our liberty to any foreign army distracts me for the consequences.'

"My reinstatement in my apartments at the Pavilion of Flora seemed not only to give universal satisfaction to every individual of the Royal Family, but it was hailed with much enthusiasm by many deputies of the constituent Assembly. I was honoured with the respective visits of all who were in any degree well disposed to the royal cause.

"One day, when Barnave and others were present with the Queen, 'Now,' exclaimed one of the deputies, 'now that this good Princess is returned to her adopted country, the active zeal of Her Highness, coupled with Your Majesty's powerful influence over the mind of the King for the welfare of his subjects, will give fresh vigour to the full execution of the Constitution.'

"My visitors were earnest in their invitations for me to go to the Assembly to hear an interesting discussion, which was to be brought forward upon the King's spontaneous acceptance of the Constitution.

"I went; and amidst the plaudits for the good King's condescension, how was my heart lacerated to hear Robespierre denounce three of the most distinguished of the members, who had requested my attendance, as traitors to their country!

"This was the first and only Assembly discussion I ever attended; and how dearly did I pay for my curiosity! I was accompanied by my 'cara Inglesina', who, always on the alert, exclaimed, 'Let me entreat Your Highness not to remain any longer in this place. You are too deeply moved to dissemble.'

"I took her judicious advice, and the moment I could leave the Assembly unperceived, I hastened back to the Queen to beg her, for God's sake, to be upon her guard; for, from what I had just heard at the Assembly, I feared the Jacobins had discovered her plans with Barnave, De Lameth, Duport, and others of the royal party. Her countenance, for some minutes, seemed to be the only sensitive part of her. It was perpetually shifting from a high florid colour to the paleness of death. When her first emotions gave way to nature, she threw herself into my arms, and, for some time, her feelings were so overcome by the dangers which threatened these worthy men, that she could only in the bitterness of her anguish exclaim, 'Oh! this is all on my account!' And I think she was almost as much alarmed for the safety of these faithful men, as she had been for that of the King on the 17th of July, when the Jacobins in the Champ de Mars called out to have the King brought to trial—a day of which the horrors were never effaced from her memory!

[38] *The only difference of any moment which ever existed between the Queen and the Princesse de Lamballe as to their sentiments on the Revolution was on this subject. Her Highness wished Marie Antoinette to rely on the many persons who had offered and promised to serve the cause of the monarchy with their internal resources, and not depend on the Princes and foreign armies. This salutary advice she never could enforce on the Queen's mind, though she had to that effect been importuned by upwards of two hundred persona, all zealous to show their penitence for former errors by their present devotedness.*
"Whenever," observed Her Highness, "we came to that point, the Queen (upon seriously reflecting that these persons had been active instruments in promoting the first changes in the monarchy, for which she never forgave them from her heart) would hesitate and doubt; and never could I bring Her Majesty definitely to believe the profferers to be sincere. Hence, they were trifled with, till one by one she either lost them, or saw them sacrificed to an attachment, which her own distrust and indecision rendered fruitless."

“The King and Princesse Elizabeth fortunately came in at the moment; but even our united efforts were unavailable. The grief of Her Majesty at feeling herself the cause of the misfortunes of these faithful adherents, now devoted victims of their earnestness in foiling the machinations against the liberty and life of the King and herself, made her nearly frantic. She too well knew that to be accused was to incur instant death. That she retained her senses under the convulsion of her feelings can only be ascribed to that wonderful strength of mind, which triumphed over every bodily weakness, and still sustains her under every emergency.

“The King and the Princesse Elizabeth, by whom Barnave had been much esteemed ever since the journey from Varennes, were both inconsolable. I really believe the Queen entirely owed her instantaneous recovery from that deadly lethargic state, in which she had been thrown by her grief for the destined sacrifice, to the exuberant goodness of the King’s heart, who instantly resolved to compromise his own existence, to save those who had forfeited theirs for him and his family.

“Seeing the emotion of the Queen, ‘I will go myself to the Assembly,’ said Louis XVI., ‘and declare their innocence.’

“The Queen sprang forward, as if on the wings of an angel, and grasping the King in her arms, cried, ‘Will you hasten their deaths by confirming the impression of your keeping up an understanding with them? Gracious Heaven! Oh, that I could recall the acts of attachment they have shown us, since to these they are now falling victims! I would save them,’ continued Her Majesty, ‘with my own blood; but, Sire, it is useless. We should only expose ourselves to the vindictive spirit of the Jacobins without aiding the cause of our devoted friends.’

“‘Who,’ asked she, I was the guilty wretch that accused our unfortunate Barnave?’

“‘Robespierre.’

“‘Robespierre!’ echoed Her Majesty. ‘Oh, God! then he is numbered with the dead! This fellow is too fond of blood to be tempted with money. But you, Sire, must not interfere!’

“Notwithstanding these doubts, however, I undertook, at the King’s and Queen’s most earnest desire, to get some one to feel the pulse of Robespierre, for the salvation of these our only palladium to the constitutional monarchy. To the first application, though made through the medium of one of his earliest college intimates, Carrier, the wretch was utterly deaf and insensible. Of this failure I hastened to apprise Her Majesty. ‘Was any, sum,’ asked she, ‘named as a compensation for suspending this trial?’—‘None,’ replied I. ‘I had no commands to that effect.’—‘Then let the attempt be renewed, and back it with the argument of a cheque for a hundred thousand livres on M. Laborde. He has saved my life and the King’s, and, as far as is in my power, I am determined to save his. Barnave has exposed his life more than any of our unfortunate friends, and if we can but succeed in saving him, he will speedily be enabled to save his colleagues. Should the sum I name be insufficient, my jewels shall be disposed of to make up a larger one. Fly to your agent, dear Princess! Lose not a moment to intercede in behalf of these our only true friends!’

“I did so, and was fortunate enough to gain over to my personal entreaties one who had the courage to propose the business; and a hundred and fifty thousand livres procured them a suspension of accusation. All, however, are still watched with such severity of scrutiny that I tremble, even now, for the result.”[39]

[39] *And with reason; for all, eventually, were sacrificed upon the scaffold. Carrier was the factotum in all the cool, deliberate, sanguinary operations of Robespierre; when he saw the cheque, he said to the Princesse de Lamballe: “Madame, though your personal charms and mental virtues had completely influenced all the*

“It was in the midst of such apprehensions, which struck terror into the hearts of the King and Queen, that the Tuileries resounded with cries of multitudes hired to renew those shouts of ‘Vive le roi! vive la famille royale!’ which were once spontaneous.

“In one of the moments of our deepest affliction, multitudes were thronging the gardens and enjoying the celebration of the acceptance of the Constitution. What a contrast to the feelings of the unhappy inmates of the palace! We may well say, that many an aching heart rides in a carriage, while the pedestrian is happy!

“The fetes on this occasion were very brilliant. The King, the Queen, and the Royal Family were invited to take part in this first national festival. They did so, by appearing in their carriage through the streets of Paris, and the Champs Elysees, escorted only by the Parisian guard, there being no other at the time. The mob was so great that the royal carriage could only keep pace with the foot-passengers.

“Their Majesties were in general well received. The only exceptions were a few of the Jacobin members of the Assembly, who, even on this occasion, sought every means to afflict the hearts, and shock the ears, of Their Majesties, by causing republican principles to be vociferated at the very doors of their carriage.

“The good sense of the King and Queen prevented them from taking any notice of these insults while in public; but no sooner had they returned to the castle, than the Queen gave way to her grief at the premeditated humiliation she was continually witnessing to the majesty of the constitutional monarchy,—an insult less to the King himself than to the nation, which had acknowledged him their Sovereign.

“When the royal party entered the apartment, they found M. de Montmorin with me, who had come to talk over these matters, secure that at such a moment we should not be surprised.

“On hearing the Queen’s observation, M. de Montmorin made no secret of the necessity there was of Their Majesties dissembling their feelings; the avowal of which, he said, would only tend to forward the triumph of Jacobinism, ‘which,’ added he, ‘I am sorry to see predominates in the Assembly, and keeps in subordination all the public and private clubs.’

“‘What!’ exclaimed the Princesse Elizabeth, can that be possible, after the King has accepted the Constitution?’

“‘Yes,’ said the Queen; these people, my dear Elizabeth, wish for a Constitution which sanctions the overthrow of him by whom it has been granted.’

“‘In this,’ observed M. de Montmorin, ‘as on some other points, I perfectly agree with Your Majesty and the King, notwithstanding I have been opposed by the whole Council and many other honest constituent members, as well as the Cabinet of Vienna. And it is still, as it has ever been, my firm opinion, that the King ought, previous to the acceptance of the Constitution, to have been allowed, for the security of its future organization, to have examined it maturely; which, not having been the case, I foresee the dangerous situation in which His Majesty stands, and I foresee, too, the non-promulgation of this charter. Malouet, who is an honest man, is of my opinion. Duport, De Lameth, Barnave, and even La Fayette are intimidated at the prevailing spirit of the Jacobins. They were all with the best intentions for Your Majesty’s present safety, for the acceptance in toto, but without reflecting on the consequences which must follow should the nation be deceived. But I, who am, and ever shall be, attached to royalty, regret the step, though I am clear in my impression as to the only

authority I could exercise in favour of your protege, without this interesting argument I should not have had courage to have renewed the business with the principal agent of life and death.”

course which ought to succeed it. The throne can now only be made secure by the most unequivocal frankness of proceeding on the part of the Crown. It is not enough to have conceded, it is necessary also to show that the concession has some more solid origin than mere expediency. It should be made with a good grace. Every motive of prudence, as well as of necessity, requires that the monarch himself, and all those most interested for his safety, should, neither in looks, manners, or conversation, seem as if they felt a regret for what has been lost, but rather appear satisfied with what has been bestowed.'

"'In that case,' said the Queen, 'we should lose all the support of the royalists.'

"'Every royalist, Madame,' replied he, 'who, at this critical crisis, does not avow the sentiments of a constitutionalist, is a nail in the King's untimely coffin.'

"'Gracious God!' cried the Queen; 'that would destroy the only hope which still flatters our drooping existence. Symptoms of moderation, or any conciliatory measures we might be inclined to show, of our free will, to the constitutionalists, would be immediately considered as a desertion of our supporters, and treachery to ourselves, by the royalists.'

"'It would be placed entirely out of my power, Madame,' replied M. de Montmorin, 'to make my attachment to the persons of Your Majesties available for the maintenance of your rights, did I permit the factious, overbearing party which prevails to see into my real zeal for the restoration of the royal authority, so necessary for their own future honour, security, and happiness. Could they see this, I should be accused as a national traitor, or even worse, and sent out of the world by a sudden death of ignominy, merely to glut their hatred of monarchy; and it is therefore I dissemble.'

"'I perfectly agree with you,' answered the Queen. That cruel moment when I witnessed the humiliating state to which royalty had been reduced by the constituents, when they placed the President of their Assembly upon a level with the King; gave a plebeian, exercising his functions pro tempore, prerogatives in the face of the nation to trample down hereditary monarchy and legislative authority—that cruel moment discovered the fatal truth. In the anguish of my heart, I told His Majesty that he had outlived his kingly authority: Here she burst into tears, hiding her face in her handkerchief.

"With the mildness of a saint, the angelic Princesse Elizabeth exclaimed, turning to the King, 'Say something to the Queen, to calm her anguish!'

"'It will be of no avail,' said the King; 'her grief adds to my affliction. I have been the innocent cause of her participating in this total ruin, and as it is only her fortitude which has hitherto supported me, with the same philosophical and religious resignation we must await what fate destines!'

"'Yes,' observed M. de Montmorin; 'but Providence has also given us the rational faculty of opposing imminent danger, and by activity and exertion obviating its consequences.'

"'In what manner, sir?' cried the Queen; 'tell me how this is to be effected, and, with the King's sanction, I am ready to do anything to avert the storm, which so loudly threatens the august head of the French nation.'

"'Vienna, Madame,' replied he; 'Vienna! Your Majesty's presence at Vienna would do more for the King's safety, and the nation's future tranquillity, than the most powerful army.'

"'We have long since suggested,' said the Princesse Elizabeth, 'that Her Majesty should fly from France and take refuge——'

"'Pardon me, Princess,' interrupted M. de Montmorin, 'it is not for refuge solely I would have Her Majesty go thither. It is to give efficacy to the love she bears the King and his

family, in being there the powerful advocate to check the fallacious march of a foreign army to invade us for the subjection of the French nation. All these external attempts will prove abortive, and only tend to exasperate the French to crime and madness. Here I coincide with my coadjutors, Barnave, Duport, De Lameth, etc. The principle on which the re-establishment of the order and tranquillity of France depends, can be effected only by the non-interference of foreign powers. Let them leave the rational resources of our own internal force to re-establish our real interests, which every honest Frenchman will strive to secure, if not thwarted by the threats and menaces of those who have no right to interfere. Besides, Madame, they are too far from us to afford immediate relief from the present dangers internally surrounding us. These are the points of fearful import. It is not the threats and menaces of a foreign army which can subdue a nation's internal factions. These only rouse them to prolong disorders. National commotions can be quelled only by national spirit, whose fury, once exhausted on those who have aroused it, leave it free to look within, and work a reform upon itself.'

"M. de Montmorin, after many other prudent exhortations and remarks, and some advice with regard to the King and Queen's household, took his. leave. He was no sooner gone than it was decided by the King that Marie Antoinette, accompanied by myself and some other ladies, and the gentlemen of the bedchamber, couriers, etc., should set out forthwith for Vienna.[40]

"To say why this purpose was abandoned is unnecessary. The same fatality, which renders every project unattainable, threw insuperable impediments, in the way of this."

[40] *The Princease de Lamballe sent me directions that very evening, some time after midnight, to be at our place of rendezvous early in the morning. I was overjoyed at the style of the note. It was the least mysterious I had ever received from Her Highness. I inferred that some fortunate event had occurred, with which, knowing how deeply I was interested in the fate of her on whom my own so much depended, she was, eager to make me acquainted.*
But what was my surprise, on entering the church fixed on for the meeting, to see the Queen's unknown confessor beckoning me to come to him. I approached. He bade me wait till after Mass, when he had something to communicate from the Princess.
This confessor officiated in the place of the one whom Mirabeau had seduced to take the constitutional oath. The Queen and Princess confessed to him in the private apartment of Her Highness on the ground floor; though it was never known where, or to whom they confessed, after the treachery of the royal confessor. This faithful and worthy successor was only known as "the known." I never heard who he was, or what was his name.
The Mass being over, I followed him into the sacristy. He told me that the Princess, by Her Majesty's command, wished me to set off immediately for Strasburg, and there await the arrival of Her Highness, to be in readiness to follow her and Her Majesty for the copying of the cipher, as they were going to Vienna.
When everything, however, had been settled for their departure, which it was agreed was to take place from the house of Count Fersen, the resolution was suddenly changed; but I was desired to hold myself in readiness for another journey.

Section 12

“The news of the death of the Emperor Leopold, in the midst of the other distresses of Her Majesty, afflicted her very deeply; the more so because she had every reason to think he fell a victim to the active part he took in her favour. Externally, this monarch certainly demonstrated no very great inclination to become a member of the coalition of Pilnitz. He judged, very justly, that his brother Joseph had not only defeated his own purposes by too openly and violently asserting the cause of their unfortunate sister, but had destroyed himself, and, therefore, selected what he deemed the safer and surer course of secret support. But all his caution proved abortive. The Assembly knew his manoeuvres as well as he himself did. He died an untimely death; and the Queen was assured, from undoubted authority, that both Joseph and Leopold were poisoned in their medicines.

“During my short absence in England, the King’s household had undergone a complete change. When the emigration first commenced, a revolution in the officers of the Court took place, but it was of a nature different from this last; and, by destroying itself, left the field open to those who now made the palace so intolerable. The first change to which I refer arose as follows:

“The greater part of the high offices being vacated by the secession of the most distinguished nobility, many places fell to persons who had all their lives occupied very subordinate situations. These, to retain their offices, were indiscreet enough publicly to declare their dissent from all the measures of the Assembly; an absurdity, which, at the commencement, was encouraged by the Court, till the extreme danger of encouraging it was discovered too late; and when once the error had been tolerated, and rewarded, it was found impossible to check it, and stop these fatal tongues. The Queen, who disliked the character of capriciousness, for a long time allowed the injury to go on, by continuing about her those who inflicted it. The error, which arose from delicacy, was imputed to a very different and less honourable feeling, till the clamour became so great, that she was obliged to yield to it, and dismiss those who had acted with so much indiscretion.

“The King and Queen did not dare now to express themselves on the subject of the substitutes who were to succeed. Consequently they became surrounded by persons placed by the Assembly as spies. The most conspicuous situations were filled by the meanest persons—not, as in the former case, by such as had risen, though by accident, still regularly to their places—but by myrmidons of the prevailing power, to whom Their Majesties were compelled to submit, because their rulers willed it. All orders of nobility were abolished. All the Court ladies, not attached to the King and Queen personally, abandoned the Court. No one would be seen at the Queen’s card-parties, once so crowded, and so much sought after. We were entirely reduced to the family circle. The King, when weary of playing with the Princesse Elizabeth and the Queen, would retire to his apartments without uttering a word, not from sullenness, but overcome by silent grief.

“The Queen was occupied continually by the extensive correspondence she had to carry on with the foreign Sovereigns, the Princes, and the different parties. Her Majesty once gave me nearly thirty letters she had written in the course of two days, which were forwarded by my cara Inglesina—cara indeed! for she was of the greatest service.

“Her Majesty slept very little. But her courage never slackened; and neither her health, nor her general amiableness, was in the least affected. Though few persons could be more sensible than herself to poignant mortification at seeing her former splendour hourly decrease, yet she never once complained. She was, in this respect, a real stoic.

“The palace was now become, what it still remains, like a police office. It was filled with spies and runners. Every member of the Assembly, by some means or other, had his respective emissary. All the antechambers were peopled by inveterate Jacobins, by those whose greatest pleasure was to insult the ears and minds of all whom they considered above themselves in birth, or rank, or virtue. So completely were the decencies of life abolished, that common respect was withheld even from the Royal Family.

“I was determined to persevere in my usual line of conduct, of which the King and Queen very much approved. Without setting up for a person of importance, I saw all who wished for public or private audiences of Their Majesties. I carried on no intrigues, and only discharged the humble duties of my situation to the best of my ability for the general good, and to secure, as far as possible, the comfort of Their Majesties, who really were to be pitied, utterly friendless and forsaken as they were.

“M. Laporte, the head of the King’s private police, came to me one day in great consternation. He had discovered that schemes were on foot to poison all the Royal Family, and that, in a private committee of the Assembly, considerable pensions had been offered for the perpetration of the crime. Its facility was increased, as far as regarded the Queen, by the habit to which Her Majesty had accustomed herself of always keeping powdered sugar at hand, which, without referring to her attendants, she would herself mix with water and drink as a beverage whenever she was thirsty.

“I entreated M. Laporte not to disclose the conspiracy to the Queen till I had myself had an opportunity of apprising her of his praiseworthy zeal. He agreed, on condition that precautions should be immediately adopted with respect to the persons who attended the kitchen. This, I assured him, should be done on the instant.

“At the period I mention, all sorts of etiquette had been abolished. The custom which prevented my appearing before the Queen, except at stated hours, had long since been discontinued; and, as all the other individuals who came before or after the hours of service were eyed with distrust, and I remained the only one whose access to Their Majesties was free and unsuspected, though it was very early when M. Laporte called, I thought it my duty to hasten immediately to my royal mistress.

“I found her in bed. ‘Has Your Majesty breakfasted?’ said I.

“‘No,’ replied she; ‘will you breakfast with me?’

“‘Most certainly,’ said I, ‘if Your Majesty will insure me against being poisoned.’

“At the word poison Her Majesty started up and looked at me very earnestly, and with a considerable degree of alarm.

“‘I am only joking,’ continued I; ‘I will breakfast with Your Majesty if you will give me tea.’

“Tea was presently brought. ‘In this,’ said I, ‘there is no danger.’

“‘What do you mean?’ asked Her Majesty.

“‘I am ordered,’ replied I, taking up a lump of sugar, ‘not to drink chocolate, or coffee, or anything with powdered sugar. These are times when caution alone can prevent our being sent out of the world with all our sins upon our heads.’

“‘I am very glad to hear you say so; for you have reason to be particular, after what you once so cruelly suffered from poison. But what has brought that again into your mind just now?’

“‘Well, then, since Your Majesty approves of my circumspection, allow me to say I think it advisable that we should, at a moment like this especially, abstain from all sorts of food by which our existence may be endangered. For my own part, I mean to give up all made dishes, and confine myself to the simplest diet.’

“‘Come, come, Princess,’ interrupted Her Majesty; ‘there is more in this than you wish me to understand. Fear not. I am prepared for anything that may be perpetrated against my own life, but let me preserve from peril my King, my husband, and my children!’

“My feelings prevented me from continuing to dissemble. I candidly repeated all I had heard from M. Laporte.

“Her Majesty instantly rang for one of her confidential women. ‘Go to the King,’ said Her Majesty to the attendant, ‘and if you find him alone, beg him to come to me at once; but, if there are any of the guards or other persons within hearing, merely say that the Princesse de Lamballe is with me and is desirous of the loan of a newspaper.’

“The King’s guard, and indeed most of those about him, were no better than spies, and this caution in the Queen was necessary to prevent any jealousy from being excited by the sudden message.

“When the messenger left us by ourselves, I observed to Her Majesty that it would be imprudent to give the least publicity to the circumstance, for were it really mere suspicion in the head of the police, its disclosure might only put this scheme into some miscreant’s head, and tempt him to realize it. The Queen said I was perfectly right, and it should be kept secret.

“Our ambassadress was fortunate enough to reach the King’s apartment unobserved, and to find him unattended, so he received the message forthwith. On leaving the apartment, however, she was noticed and watched. She immediately went out of the Tuileries as if sent to make purchases, and some time afterwards returned with some trifling articles in her hand.[41]

“The moment the King appeared, ‘Sire,’ exclaimed Her Majesty, ‘the Assembly, tired of endeavouring to wear us to death by slow torment, have devised an expedient to relieve their own anxiety and prevent us from putting them to further inconvenience.’

“‘What do you mean?’ said the King. I repeated my conversation with M. Laporte. ‘Bah! bah!’ resumed His Majesty, ‘They never will attempt it. They have fixed on other methods of getting rid of us. They have not policy enough to allow our deaths to be ascribed to accident. They are too much initiated in great crimes already.’

“‘But,’ asked the Queen, ‘do you not think it highly necessary to make use of every precaution, when we are morally sure of the probability of such a plot?’

[41] *This incident will give the reader an idea of the cruel situation in which the first Sovereigns of Europe then stood; and how much they appreciated the few subjects who devoted themselves to thwart and mitigate the tyranny practised by the Assembly over these illustrious victims. I can speak from my own experience on these matters. From the time I last accompanied the Princesse de Lamballe to Paris till I left it in 1792, what between milliners, dressmakers, flower girls, fancy toy sellers, perfumers, hawkers of jewellery, purse and gaiter makers, etc., I had myself assumed twenty different characters, besides that of a drummer boy, sometimes blackening my face to enter the palace unnoticed, and often holding conversations analogous to the sentiments of the wretches who were piercing my heart with the remarks circumstances compelled me to encourage. Indeed, I can safely say I was known, in some shape or other, to almost everybody, but to no one in my real character, except the Princess by whom I was so graciously employed.*

"'Most certainly! otherwise we should be, in the eyes of God, almost guilty of suicide. But how prevent it? surrounded as we are by persons who, being seduced to believe that we are plotting against them, feel justified in the commission of any crime under the false idea of self-defence!'

"'We may prevent it,' replied Her Majesty, 'by abstaining from everything in our diet wherein poison can be introduced; and that we can manage without making any stir by the least change either in the kitchen arrangements or in our own, except, indeed, this one. Luckily, as we are restricted in our attendants, we have a fair excuse for dumb waiters, whereby it will be perfectly easy to choose or discard without exciting suspicion.'

"This, consequently, was the course agreed upon; and every possible means, direct and indirect, was put into action to secure the future safety of the Royal Family and prevent the accomplishment of the threat of poison."[42]

[42] *On my seeing the Princess next morning, Her Highness condescended to inform me of the danger to which herself and the Royal Family were exposed. She requested I would send my man servant to the persons who served me, to fill a moderate-sized hamper with wine, salt, chocolate, biscuits, and liquors, and take it to her apartment, at the Pavilion of Flora, to be used as occasion required. All the fresh bread and butter which was necessary I got made for nearly a fortnight by persons whom I knew at a distance from the palace, whither I always conveyed it myself.*

Section 13. Editor In Continuation

I am again, for this and the following chapter, compelled to resume the pen in my own person, and quit the more agreeable office of a transcriber for my illustrious patroness.

I have already mentioned that the Princesse de Lamballe, on first returning from England to France, anticipated great advantages from the recall of the emigrants. The desertion of France by so many of the powerful could not but be a deathblow to the prosperity of the monarchy. There was no reason for these flights at the time they began. The fugitives only set fire to the four quarters of the globe against their country. It was natural enough that the servants whom they had left behind to keep their places should take advantage of their masters' pusillanimity, and make laws to exclude those who had, uncalled for, resigned the sway into bolder and more active hands.

I do not mean to impeach the living for the dead; but, when we see those bearing the lofty titles of Kings and Princesses, escaping with their wives and families, from an only brother and sister with helpless infant children, at the hour of danger, we cannot help wishing for a little plebeian disinterestedness in exalted minds.

I have travelled Europe twice, and I have never seen any woman with that indescribable charm of person, manner, and character, which distinguished Marie Antoinette. This is in itself a distinction quite sufficient to detach friends from its possessor through envy. Besides, she was Queen of France, the woman of highest rank in a most capricious, restless and libertine nation. The two Princesses placed nearest to her, and who were the first to desert her, though both very much inferior in personal and mental qualifications, no doubt, though not directly, may have entertained some anticipations of her place. Such feelings are not likely to decrease the distaste, which results from comparisons to our own disadvantage. It is, therefore, scarcely to be wondered at, that those nearest to the throne should be least attached to those who fill it. How little do such persons think that the grave they are thus insensibly digging may prove their own! In this case it only did not by a miracle. What the effect of the royal brothers' and the nobility's remaining in France would have been we can only conjecture. That their departure caused, great and irreparable evils we know; and we have good reason to think they caused the greatest. Those who abandon their houses on fire, silently give up their claims to the devouring element. Thus the first emigration kindled the French flame, which, though for a while it was got under by a foreign stream, was never completely, extinguished till subdued by its native current.

The unfortunate Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette ceased to be Sovereigns from the period they were ignominiously dragged to their jail at the Tuileries. From this moment they were abandoned to the vengeance of miscreants, who were disgracing the nation with unprovoked and useless murders. But from this moment also the zeal of the Princesses Elizabeth and de Lamballe became redoubled. Out of one hundred individuals and more, male and female, who had been exclusively occupied about the person of Marie Antoinette, few, excepting this illustrious pair, and the inestimable Clery, remained devoted to the last. The saint-like virtues of these Princesses, malice itself has not been able to tarnish. Their love and unalterable friendship became the shield of their unfortunate Sovereigns, and their much injured relatives, till the dart struck their own faithful bosoms. Princes of the earth! here is a lesson of greatness from the great.

Scarcely had the Princesse de Lamballe been reinstated in the Pavilion of Flora at the Tuileries, when, by the special royal command, and in Her Majesty's presence, she wrote to most of the nobility, entreating their return to France. She urged them, by every argument, that there was no other means of saving them and their country from the horrors impending over them and France, should they persevere in their pernicious absence. In some of these letters, which I copied, there was written on the margin, in the Queen's hand, "I am at her elbow, and repeat the necessity of your returning, if you love your King, your religion, your Government, and your country. Marie Antoinette. Return! Return! Return!"

Among these letters, I remember a large envelope directed to the Duchesse de Brisac, then residing alternately at the baths of Albano and the mineral waters at Valdagno, near Vicenza, in the Venetian States. Her Grace was charged to deliver letters addressed to Her Majesty's royal brothers, the Comte de Provence, and the Comte d'Artois, who were then residing, I think, at Stra, on the Brenta, in company with Madame de Polcatre, Diane de Polignac, and others.

A few days after, I took another envelope, addressed to the Count Dufour, who was at Turin. It contained letters for M. and Madame de Polignac, M. and Madame de Guiche Grammont, the King's aunts at Rome, and the two Princesses of Piedmont, wives of His Majesty's brothers.

If, therefore, a judgment can be formed from the impressions of the Royal Family, who certainly must have had ample information with respect to the spirit which predominated at Paris at that period, could the nobility have been prevailed on to have obeyed the mandates of the Queen and prayers and invocations of the Princess, there can be no doubt that much bloodshed would have been spared, and the page of history never have been sullied by the atrocious names which now stand there as beacons of human infamy.

The storms were now so fearfully increasing that the King and Queen, the Duc de Penthievre, the Count Fersen, the Princesse Elizabeth, the Duchesse d'Orleans, and all the friends of the Princesse de Lamballe, once more united in anxious wishes for her to quit France. Even the Pope himself endeavoured to prevail upon Her Highness to join the royal aunts at Rome. To all these applications she replied, "I have nothing to reproach myself with. If my inviolable duty and unalterable attachment to my Sovereigns, who are my relations and my friends; if love for my dear father and for my adopted country are crimes, in the face of God and the world I confess my guilt, and shall die happy if in such a cause!"

The Duc de Penthievre, who loved her as well as his own child, the Duchesse d'Orleans, was too good a man, and too conscientious a Prince, not to applaud the disinterested firmness of his beloved daughter-in-law; yet, foreseeing and dreading the fatal consequence which must result from so much virtue at a time when vice alone predominated, unknown to the Princesse de Lamballe, he interested the Court of France to write to the Court of Sardinia to entreat that the King, as head of her family, would use his good offices in persuading the Princess to leave the scenes of commotion, in which she was so much exposed, and return to her native country. The King of Sardinia, her family, and her particular friend, the Princess of Piedmont, supplicated ineffectually. The answer of Her Highness to the King, at Turin, was as follows:

"SIRE, AND MOST AUGUST COUSIN,—

"I do not recollect that any of our illustrious ancestors of the house of Savoy, before or since the great hero Charles Emmanuel, of immortal memory, ever dishonoured or tarnished their illustrious names with cowardice. In leaving the Court of France at this awful crisis, I should be the first. Can Your Majesty pardon my presumption in differing from your royal counsel? The King, Queen, and every member of the Royal Family of France, both from the ties of

blood and policy of States, demand our united efforts in their defence. I cannot swerve from my determination of never quitting them, especially at a moment when they are abandoned by every one of their former attendants, except myself. In happier days Your Majesty may command my obedience; but, in the present instance, and given up as is the Court of France to their most atrocious persecutors, I must humbly insist on being guided by my own decision. During the most brilliant period of the reign of Marie Antoinette, I was distinguished by the royal favour and bounty. To abandon her in adversity, Sire, would stain my character, and that of my illustrious family, for ages to come, with infamy and cowardice, much more to be dreaded than the most cruel death."

Similar answers were returned to all those of her numerous friends and relatives, who were so eager to shelter her from the dangers threatening Her Highness and the Royal Family.

Her Highness was persuaded, however, to return once more to England, under the pretext of completing the mission she had so successfully began; but it is very clear that neither the King or Queen had any serious idea of her succeeding, and that their only object was to get her away from the theatre of disaster. Circumstances had so completely changed for the worst, that, though Her Highness was received with great kindness, her mission was no longer listened to. The policy of England shrunk from encouraging twenty thousand French troops to be sent in a body to the West Indies, and France was left to its fate. A conversation with Mr. Burke, in which the disinclination of England to interfere was distinctly owned, created that deep-rooted grief and apprehension in the mind of the Queen from which Her Majesty never recovered. The Princesse de Lamballe was the only one in her confidence. It is well known that the King of England greatly respected the personal virtues of Their French Majesties; but upon the point of business, both King and Ministers were now become ambiguous and evasive. Her Highness, therefore, resolved to return. It had already been whispered that she had left France, only to save herself, like the rest; and she would no longer remain under so slanderous an imputation. She felt, too, the necessity of her friendship to her royal mistress. Though the Queen of England, by whom Her Highness was very much esteemed, and many other persons of the first consequence in the British nation, foreseeing the inevitable fate of the Royal Family, and of all their faithful adherents, anxiously entreated her not to quit England, yet she became insensible to every consideration as to her own situation and only felt the isolated one of her august Sovereign, her friend, and benefactress.

Section 14. Editor In Continuation

Events seemed molded expressly to produce the state of feeling which marked that disastrous day, the 20th of June, 1792. It frequently happens that nations, like individuals, rush wildly upon the very dangers they apprehend, and select such courses as invite what they are most solicitous to avoid. So it was with everything preceding this dreadful day. By a series of singular occurrences I did not witness its horrors, though in some degree their victim. Not to detain my readers unnecessarily, I will proceed directly to the accident which withdrew me from the scene.

The apartment of the Princesse de Lamballe, in the Pavilion of Flora, looked from one side upon the Pont Royal. On the day of which I speak, a considerable quantity of combustibles had been thrown from the bridge into one of her rooms. The Princess, in great alarm, sent instantly for me. She desired to have my English man servant, if he were not afraid, secreted in her room, while she herself withdrew to another part of the palace, till the extent of the intended mischief could be ascertained. I assured Her Highness that I was not only ready to answer for my servant, but would myself remain with him, as he always went armed, and I was so certain of his courage and fidelity that I could not hesitate even to trust my life in his hands.

“For God’s sake, ‘mia cara’,” exclaimed the Princess, “do not risk your own safety, if you have any value for my friendship. I desire you not to go near the Pavilion of Flora. Your servant’s going is quite sufficient. Never again let me hear such a proposition. What! after having hitherto conducted yourself so punctually, would you, by one rash act, devote yourself to ruin, and deprive us of your valuable services?”

I begged Her Highness would pardon the ardour of the dutiful zeal I felt for her in the moment of danger.

“Yes, yes,” continued she; “that is all very well; but this is not the first time I have been alarmed at your too great intrepidity; and if ever I hear of your again attempting to commit yourself so wantonly, I will have you sent to Turin immediately, there to remain till you have recovered your senses. I always thought English heads cool; but I suppose your residence in France has changed the national character of yours.”

Once more, with tears in my eyes, I begged her forgiveness, and, on my knees, implored that she would not send me away in the hour of danger. After having so long enjoyed the honour of her confidence, I trusted she would overlook my fault, particularly as it was the pure emanation of my resentment at any conspiracy against one I so dearly loved; and to whom I had been under so many obligations, that the very idea of being deprived of such a benefactress drove me frantic.

Her Highness burst into tears. “I know your heart,” exclaimed she; “but I also know too well our situation, and it is that which makes me tremble for the consequences which must follow your overstepping the bounds so necessary to be observed by all of us at this horrid period.” And then she called me again her cars ‘Inglesina’, and graciously condescended to embrace me, and bathed my face with her tears, in token of her forgiveness, and bade me sit down and compose myself, and weep no more.

Scarcely was I seated, when we were both startled by deafening shouts for the head of Madame Veto, the name they gave the poor unfortunate Queen. An immense crowd of

cannibals and hired ruffians were already in the Tuileries, brandishing all sorts of murderous weapons, and howling for blood! My recollections from this moment are very indistinct. I know that in an instant the apartment was filled; that the Queen, the Princesse Elizabeth, all the attendants, even the King, I believe, appeared there. I myself received a wound upon my hand in warding a blow from my face; and in the turmoil of the scene, and of the blow, I fainted, and was conveyed by some humane person to a place of safety, in the upper part of the palace.

Thus deprived of my senses for several hours, I was spared the agony of witnessing the scenes of horror that succeeded. For two or three days I remained in a state of so much exhaustion and alarm, that when the Princess came to me I did not know her, nor even where I was.

As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, places were taken for me and another person in one of the common diligences, by which I was conveyed to Passy, where the Princess came to me in the greatest confusion.

My companion in the palace was the widow of one of the Swiss guards, who had been murdered on the 6th of October, in defending the Queen's apartment at Versailles. The poor woman had been herself protected by Her Majesty, and accompanied me by the express order of the Princesse de Lamballe. What the Princess said to her on departing, I know not, for I only caught the words "general insurrection," on hearing which the afflicted woman fell into a fit. To me, Her Highness merely exclaimed, "Do not come to Paris till you hear from me;" and immediately set off to return to the Tuileries.

However, as usual, my courage soon got the better of my strength, and of every consideration of personal safety. On the third day, I proposed to the person who took care of me that we should both walk out together, and, if there appeared no symptoms of immediate danger, it was agreed that we might as well get into one of the common conveyances, and proceed forthwith to Paris; for I could no longer repress my anxiety to learn what was going on there, and the good creature who was with me was no less impatient.

When we got into a diligence, I felt the dread of another severe lecture like the last, and thought it best not to incur fresh blame by new imprudence. I therefore told the driver to set us down on the high road near Paris leading to the Bois de Boulogne. But before we got so far, the woods resounded with the howling of mobs, and we heard, "Vive le roi" vociferated, mingled with "Down with the King,"—"Down with the Queen;" and, what was still more horrible, the two parties were in actual bloody strife, and the ground was strewn with the bodies of dead men, lying like slaughtered sheep.

It was fortunate that we were the only persons in the vehicle. The driver, observing our extreme agitation, turned round to us. "Nay, nay," cried he; "do not alarm yourselves. It is only the constitutionalists and the Jacobins fighting against each other. I wish the devil had them both."

It was evident, however, that, though the man was desirous of quieting our apprehensions, he was considerably disturbed by his own; for though he acknowledged he had a wife and children in Paris, who he hoped were safe, still he dared not venture to proceed, but said, if we wished to be driven back, he would take us to any place we liked, out of Paris.

Our anxiety to know what was going forward at the Tuileries was now become intolerable; and the more so, from the necessity we felt of restraining our feelings. At last, however, we were in some degree relieved from this agony of reserve.

“God knows,” exclaimed the driver, “what will be the consequence of all this bloodshed! The poor King and Queen are greatly to be pitied!”

This ejaculation restored our courage, and we said he might drive us wherever he chose out of the sight of those horrors; and it was at length settled that he should take us to Passy. “Oh,” cried he, “if you will allow me, I will take you to my father’s house there; for you seem more dead than alive, both of you, and ought to go where you can rest in quiet and safety.”

My companion, who was a German, now addressed me in that language.

“German!” exclaimed the driver on hearing her. “German! Why, I am a German myself, and served the good King, who is much to be pitied, for many years; and when I was wounded, the Queen, God bless her! set me up in the world, as I was made an invalid; and I have ever since been enabled to support my family respectably. D—— the Assembly! I shall never be a farthing the better for them!”

“Oh,” replied I, “then I suppose you are not a Jacobin?”

The driver, with a torrent of curses, then began execrating the very name of Jacobin. This emboldened me to ask him when he had left Paris. He replied, “Only this very morning,” and added that the Assembly had shut the gates of the Tuileries under the pretence of preventing the King and Queen from being assassinated. “But that is all a confounded lie,” continued he, “invented to keep out the friends of the Royal Family. But, God knows, they are now so fallen, they have few such left to be turned away!”

“I am more enraged,” pursued he, “at the ingratitude of the nobility than I am at these hordes of bloodthirsty plunderers, for we all know that the nobility owe everything to the King. Why do they not rise en masse to shield the Royal Family from these bloodhounds? Can they imagine they will be spared if the King should be murdered? I have no patience with them!”

I then asked him our fare. “Two livres is the fare, but you shall not pay anything. I see plainly, ladies, that you are not what you assume to be.”

“My good man,” replied I, “we are not; and therefore take this louis d’or for your trouble.”

He caught my hand and pressed it to his lips, exclaiming, “I never in my life knew a man who was faithful to his King, that God did not provide for.”

He then took us to Passy, but advised us not to remain at the place where we had been staying; and fortunate enough it was for us that we did not, for the house was set on fire and plundered by a rebel mob very soon after.

I told the driver how much I was obliged to him for his services, and he seemed delighted when I promised to give him proofs of my confidence in his fidelity.

“If,” said I, “you can find out my servant whom I left in Paris, I will give you another louis d’or.” I was afraid, at first, to mention where he was to look for him.

“If he be not dead,” replied the driver, “I will find him out.”

“What!” cried I, “even though he should be at the Tuileries?”

“Why, madame, I am one of the national guard. I have only to put on my uniform to be enabled to go to any part of the palace I please. Tell me his name, and where you think it likely he may be found, and depend upon it I will bring him to you.”

“Perhaps,” continued he, “it is your husband disguised as a servant; but no matter. Give me a clue, and I’ll warrant you he shall tell you the rest himself by this time to-morrow.”

“Well, then,” replied I, “he is in the Pavilion of Flora.”

“What, with the Princesse de Lamballe? Oh, I would go through fire and water for that good Princess! She has done me the honour to stand godmother to one of my children, and allows her a pension.”

I took him at his word. We changed our quarters to his father’s house, a very neat little cottage, about a quarter of a mile from the town. He afterwards rendered me many services in going to and fro from Passy to Paris; and, as he promised, brought me my servant.

When the poor fellow arrived, his arm was in a sling. He had been wounded by a musket shot, received in defence of the Princess. The history of his disaster was this:

On the night of the riot, as he was going from the Pont Royal to the apartment of Her Highness, he detected a group of villains under her windows. Six of them were attempting to enter by a ladder. He fired, and two fell. While he was reloading, the others shot at him. Had he not, in the flurry of the moment, fired both his pistols at the same time, he thinks he should not have been wounded, but might have punished the assailant. One of the men, he said, could have been easily taken by the national guard, who so glaringly encouraged the escape that he could almost swear the guard was a party concerned. The loss of blood had so exhausted him that he could not pursue the offender himself, whom otherwise he could have taken without any difficulty.

As the employing of my servant had only been proposed, and the sudden interruption of my conversation with Her Highness by the riot had prevented my ever communicating the project to him, I wondered how he got into the business, or ascertained so soon that the apartment of the Princess was in danger. He explained that he never had heard of its being so; but my own coachman having left me at the palace that day, and not hearing of me for some time, had driven home, and, fearing that my not returning arose from something which had happened, advised him to go to the Pont Royal and hear what he could learn, as there was a report of many persons having been murdered and thrown over the bridge.

My man took the advice, and armed himself to be ready in case of attack. It was between one and two o’clock after midnight when he went. The first objects he perceived were these miscreants attempting to scale the palace.

He told me that the Queen had been most grossly insulted; that the gates of the Tuileries had been shut in consequence; that a small part alone remained open to the public, who were kept at their distance by a national ribbon, which none could pass without being instantly arrested. This had prevented his apprising the Princess of the attempt which he had accidentally defeated, and which he wished me to communicate to her immediately. I did so by letter, which my good driver carried to Paris, and delivered safe into the hands of our benefactress.

The surprise of the Princess on hearing from me, and her pleasure at my good fortune in finding by accident such means, baffles all description. Though she was at the time overwhelmed with the imminent dangers which threatened her, yet she still found leisure to show her kindness to those who were doing their best, though in vain, to serve her. The following letter, which she sent me in reply, written amidst all the uneasiness it describes, will speak for her more eloquently than my praises:

“I can understand your anxiety. It was well for you that you were unconscious of the dreadful scenes which were passing around you on that horrid day. The Princesse de Tarente, Madame de Tourzel, Madame de Mockau, and all the other ladies of the household owed the safety of their lives to one of the national guards having given his national cockade to the Queen. Her Majesty placed it on her head, unperceived by the mob. One of the gentlemen of the King’s wardrobe provided the King and the Princesse Elizabeth with the same impenetrable shield. Though the cannibals came for murder, I could not but admire the enthusiastic deference that

was shown to this symbol of authority, which instantly paralyzed, the daggers uplifted for our extermination.

“Merlin de Thionville was the stoic head of this party. The Princesse Elizabeth having pointed him out to me, I ventured to address him respecting the dangerous situation to which the Royal Family were daily exposed. I flattered him upon his influence over the majority of the faubourgs, to which only we could look for the extinction of these disorders. He replied that the despotism of the Court had set a bad example to the people; that he felt for the situation of the royal party as individuals, but he felt much more for the safety of the French nation, who were in still greater danger than Their Majesties had to dread, from the Austrian faction, by which a foreign army had been encouraged to invade the territory of France, where they were now waiting the opportunity of annihilating French liberty forever!

“To this Her Majesty replied, ‘When the deputies of the Assembly have permitted, nay, I may say, encouraged this open violation of the King’s asylum, and, by their indifference to the safety of all those who surround us, have sanctioned the daily insults to which we have been, and still are, exposed, it is not to be wondered, at that all Sovereigns should consider it their interest to make common cause with us, to crush internal commotions, levelled, not only against the throne, and the persons of the Sovereign and his family, but against the very principle of monarchy itself.’

“Here the King, though much intimidated for the situation of the Queen and his family, for whose heads the wretches were at that very moment howling in their ears, took up the conversation.

“‘These cruel facts,’ said he, ‘and the menacing situation you even now witness, fully justify our not rejecting foreign aid, though God knows how deeply I deplore the necessity of such a cruel resource! But, when all internal measures of conciliation have been trodden under foot, and the authorities, who ought to check it and protect us from these cruel outrages, are only occupied in daily fomenting the discord between us and our subjects; though a forlorn hope, what other hope is there of safety? I foresee the drift of all these commotions, and am resigned; but what will become of this misguided nation, when the head of it shall be destroyed?’

“Here the King, nearly choked by his feelings, was compelled to pause for a moment, and he then proceeded.

“‘I should not feel it any sacrifice to give up the guardianship of the nation, could I, in so doing, insure its future tranquillity; but I foresee that my blood, like that of one of my unhappy brother Sovereigns,—[Charles the First, of England.]—will only open the flood-gates of human misery, the torrent of which, swelled with the best blood of France, will deluge this once peaceful realm.’

“This, as well as I can recollect, is the substance of what passed at the castle on this momentous day. Our situation was extremely doubtful, and the noise and horrid riots were at times so boisterous, that frequently we could not, though so near them, distinguish a word the King and Queen said; and yet, whenever the leaders of these organized ruffians spoke or threatened, the most respectful stillness instantly prevailed.

“I weep in silence for misfortunes, which I fear are inevitable! The King, the Queen, the Princesse Elizabeth and myself, with many others under this unhappy roof, have never ventured to undress or sleep in bed, till last night. None of us any longer reside on the ground floor.

“By the very manly exertions of some of the old officers incorporated in the national army, the awful riot I have described was overpowered, and the mob, with difficulty, dispersed. Among these, I should particularize Generals de Vomenil, de Mandat, and de Roederer. Principally by their means the interior of the Tuileries was at last cleared, though partial mobs, such as you have often witnessed, still subsist.

“I am thus particular in giving you a full account of this last revolutionary commotion, that your prudence may still keep you at a distance from the vortex. Continue where you are, and tell your man servant how much I am obliged to him, and, at the same time, how much I am grieved at his being wounded! I knew nothing of the affair but from your letter and your faithful messenger. He is an old pensioner of mine, and a good honest fellow. You may depend on him. Serve yourself, through him, in communicating with me. Though he has had a limited education, he is not wanting in intellect. Remember that honesty, in matters of such vital import, is to be trusted before genius.

“My apartment appears like a barrack, like a bear garden, like anything but what it was! Numbers of valuable things have been destroyed, numbers carried off. Still, notwithstanding all the horrors of these last days, it delights me to be able to tell you that no one in the service of the Royal Family failed in duty at this dreadful crisis. I think we may firmly rely on the inviolable attachment of all around us. No jealousy, no considerations of etiquette, stood in the way of their exertions to show themselves worthy of the situations they hold. The Queen showed the greatest intrepidity during the whole of these trying scenes.

“At present, I can say no more. Petion, the Mayor of Paris, has just been announced; and, I believe, he wishes for an audience of Her Majesty, though he never made his appearance during the whole time of the riots in the palace. Adieu, mia cara Inglesina!”

The receipt of this letter, however it might have affected me to hear what Her Highness suffered, in common with the rest of the unfortunate royal inmates of the Tuileries, gave me extreme pleasure from the assurance it contained of the firmness of those nearest to the sufferers. I was also sincerely gratified in reflecting on the probity and disinterested fidelity of this worthy man, which contrasted him, so strikingly and so advantageously to himself, with many persons of birth and education, whose attachment could not stand the test of the trying scenes of the Revolution, which made them abandon and betray, where they had sworn an allegiance to which they were doubly bound by gratitude.

My man servant was attended, and taken the greatest care of. The Princess never missed a day in sending to inquire after his health; and, on his recovery, the Queen herself not only graciously condescended to see him, but, besides making him a valuable present, said many flattering and obliging things of his bravery and disinterestedness.

I should scarcely have deemed these particulars honourable as they are to the feelings of the illustrious personages from whom they proceeded—worth mentioning in a work of this kind, did they not give indications of character rarely to be met with (and, in their case, how shamefully rewarded!), from having occurred at a crisis when their minds were occupied in affairs of such deep importance, and amidst the appalling dangers which hourly threatened their own existence.

Her Majesty’s correspondence with foreign Courts had been so much increased by these scenes of horror, especially her correspondence with her relations in Italy, that, ere long, I was sent for back to Paris.

Section 15. Journal Of The Princess Resumed And Concluded

“The insurrection of the 20th of June, and the uncertain state of the safety of the Royal Family, menaced as it was by almost daily riots, induced a number of well-disposed persons to prevail on General La Fayette to leave his army and come to Paris, and there personally remonstrate against these outrages. Had he been sincere he would have backed the measure by appearing at the head of his army, then well-disposed, as Cromwell did when he turned out the rogues who were seeking the Lord through the blood of their King, and put the keys in his pocket. Violent disorders require violent remedies. With an army and a few pieces of cannon at the door of the Assembly, whose members were seeking the aid of the devil, for the accomplishment of their horrors, he might, as was done when the same scene occurred in England in 1668, by good management; have averted the deluge of blood. But, by appearing before the Assembly isolated, without ‘voila mon droit,’ which the King of Prussia had had engraven on his cannon, he lost the opinion of all parties.[43]

“La Fayette came to the palace frequently, but the King would never see him. He was obliged to return, with the additional mortification of having been deceived in his expected support from the national guard of Paris, whose pay had been secretly trebled by the National Assembly, in order to secure them to itself. His own safety, therefore, required that he should join the troops under his command. He left many persons in whom he thought he could confide; among whom were some who came to me one day requesting I would present them to the Queen without loss of time, as a man condemned to be shot had confessed to his captain that there was a plot laid to murder Her Majesty that very night.

“I hastened to the royal apartment, without mentioning the motive; but some such catastrophe was no more than what we incessantly expected, from the almost hourly changes of the national guard, for the real purpose of giving easy access to all sorts of wretches to the very rooms of the unfortunate Queen, in order to furnish opportunities for committing the crime with impunity.

“After I had seen the Queen, the applicants were introduced, and, in my presence, a paper was handed by them to Her Majesty. At the moment she received it, I was obliged to leave her for the purpose of watching an opportunity for their departure unobserved. These precautions were necessary with regard to every person who came to us in the palace, otherwise the jealousy of the Assembly and its emissaries and the national guard of the interior might have been alarmed, and we should have been placed under express and open surveillance. The confusion created by the constant change of guard, however, stood us in good stead in this emergency. Much passing and repassing took place unheeded in the bustle.

[43] *In this instance the general grossly committed himself, in the opinion of every impartial observer of his conduct. He should never have shown himself in the capital, but at the head of his army. France, circumstanced as it was, torn by intestine commotion, was only to be intimidated by the sight of a popular leader at the head of his forces. Usurped authority can only be quashed by the force of legitimate authority. La Fayette being the only individual in France that in reality possessed such an authority, not having availed himself at a crisis like the one in which he was called upon to act, rendered his conduct doubtful, and all his intended operations suspicious to both parties, whether his feelings were really inclined to prop up the fallen kingly authority, or his newly-acquired republican principles prompted him to become the head of the democratical party, for no one can see into the hearts of men; his popularity from that moment ceased to exist.*

“When the visitors had departed, and Her Majesty at one window of the palace, and I at another, had seen them safe over the Pont Royal, I returned to Her Majesty. She then graciously handed me the paper which they had presented.

“It contained an earnest supplication, signed by many thousand good citizens, that the King and Queen would sanction the plan of sending the Dauphin to the army of La Fayette. They pledged themselves, with the assistance of the royalists, to rescue the Royal Family. They, urged that if once the King could be persuaded to show himself at the head of his army, without taking any active part, but merely for his own safety and that of his family, everything might be accomplished with the greatest tranquillity.

“The Queen exclaimed, ‘What! send my child! No! never while I breathe![44]

Yet were I an independent Queen, or the regent of a minority, I feel that I should be inclined to accept the offer, to place myself at the head of the army, as my immortal mother did, who, by that step, transmitted the crown of our ancestors to its legitimate descendants. It is the monarchy itself which now requires to be asserted. Though D’ORLEANS is actively engaged in attempting the dethronement of His Majesty, I do not think the nation will submit to such a Prince, or to any other monarchical government, if the present be decidedly destroyed.

“‘All these plans, my dear Princess,’ continued she, ‘are mere castles in the air. The mischief is too deeply rooted. As they have already frantically declared for the King’s abdication, any strong measure now, incompetent as we are to assure its success, would at once arm the advocates of republicanism to proclaim the King’s dethronement.

“‘The cruel observations of Petion to His Majesty, on our ever memorable return from Varennes, have made a deeper impression than you are aware of. When the King observed to him, “What do the French nation want?”—“A republic,” replied he. And though he has been the means of already costing us some thousands, to crush this unnatural propensity, yet I firmly believe that he himself is at the head of all the civil disorders fomented for its attainment. I am the more confirmed in this opinion from a conversation I had with the good old man, M. De Malesherbes, who assured me the great sums we were lavishing on this man were thrown away, for he would be certain, eventually, to betray us: and such an inference could only have been drawn from the lips of the traitor himself. Petion must have given Malesherbes reason to believe this. I am daily more and more convinced it will be the case. Yet, were I to show the least energy or activity in support of the King’s authority, I should then be accused of undermining it. All France would be up in arms against the danger of female influence. The King would only be lessened in the general opinion of the nation, and the kingly authority still more weakened. Calm submission to His Majesty is, therefore, the only safe, course for both of us, and we must wait events.’

“While Her Majesty was thus opening her heart to me, the King and Princesse Elizabeth entered, to inform her that M. Laporte, the head of the private police, had discovered, and caused to be arrested, some of the wretches who had maliciously attempted to fire the palace of the Tuileries.

[44] *Little did this unfortunate mother think that they, who thus pretended to interest themselves for this beautiful, angelic Prince only a few months before, would, when she was in her horrid prison after the butchery of her husband, have required this only comfort to be violently torn from her maternal arms!*
Little, indeed, did she think, when her maternal devotedness thus repelled the very thought of his being trusted to myriads of sworn defenders, how soon he would be barbarously consigned by the infamous Assembly as the foot-stool of the inhuman savage cobbler, Simon, to be the night-boy of the excrements of the vilest of the works of human nature!

"'Set them at liberty!' exclaimed Her Majesty; 'or, to clear themselves and their party, they will accuse us of something worse.'

"'Such, too, is my opinion, Sire,' observed I; 'for however I abhor their intentions, I have here a letter from one of these miscreants which was found among the combustibles. It cautions us not to inhabit the upper part of the Pavilion. My not having paid the attention which was expected to the letter, has aroused the malice of the writer, and caused a second attempt to be made from the Pont Royal upon my own apartment; in preventing which, a worthy man has been cruelly wounded in the arm.'

"'Merciful Heaven!' exclaimed the poor Queen and the Princesse Elizabeth, I not dangerously, I hope!

"'I hope not,' added I; 'but the attempt, and its escaping unpunished, though there were guards all around, is a proof how perilous it will be, while we are so weak, to kindle their rancour by any show of impotent resentment; for I have reason to believe it was to that, the want of attention to the letter of which I speak was imputed.'

"The Queen took this opportunity, of laying before the King the above-mentioned plan. His Majesty, seeing it in the name of La Fayette, took up the paper, and, after he had attentively perused it, tore it in pieces, exclaiming, 'What! has not M. La Fayette done mischief enough yet, but must he even expose the names of so many worthy men by committing them to paper at a critical period like this, when he is fully aware that we are in immediate danger of being assailed by a banditti of inhuman cannibals, who would sacrifice every individual attached to us, if, unfortunately, such a paper should be found? I am determined to have nothing to do with his ruinous plans. Popularity and ambition made him the principal promoter of republicanism. Having failed of becoming a Washington, he is mad to become a Cromwell. I have no faith in these turncoat constitutionalists.'

"I know that the Queen heartily concurred in this sentiment concerning General La Fayette, as soon as she ascertained his real character, and discovered that he considered nothing paramount to public notoriety. To this he had sacrificed the interest of his country, and trampled under foot the throne; but finding he could not succeed in forming a Republican Government in France as he had in America, he, like many others, lost his popularity with the demagogues, and, when too late, came to offer his services, through me, to the Queen, to recruit a monarchy which his vanity had undermined to gratify, his chimerical ambition. Her Majesty certainly saw him frequently, but never again would she put herself in the way of being betrayed by one whom she considered faithless to all."[45]

[45] *Thus ended the proffered services of General La Fayette, who then took the command of the national army, served against that of the Prince de Conde, and the Princes of his native country, and was given up with General Bournonville, De Lameth, and others, by General Dumourier, on the first defeat of the French, to the Austrians, by whom they were sent to the fortress of Olmutz in Hungary, where they remained till after the death of the wretch Robespierre, when they were exchanged for the Duchesse d'Angouleme, now Dauphine of France. From the retired life led by General La Fayette on his return to France, there can be but little doubt that he spent a great part of his time in reflecting on the fatal errors of his former conduct, as he did not coincide with any of the revolutionary principles which preceded the short-lived reign of imperialism. But though Napoleon too well knew him to be attached from principle to republicanism—every vestige of which he had long before destroyed—to employ him in any military capacity, still he recalled him from his hiding- place, in order to prevent his doing mischief, as he politically did—every other royalist whom he could bring under the banners of his imperialism.*

Had Napoleon made use of his general knowledge of mankind in other respects, as he politically did in France over his conquered subjects, in respecting ancient habits, and gradually weaned them from their natural prejudices instead of violently forcing all men to become Frenchmen, all men would have fought for him, and not against him. These were the weapons by which his power became annihilated, and which, in the end, will be

Here ends the Journal of my lamented benefactress. I have continued the history to the close of her career, and that of the Royal Family, especially as Her Highness herself acted so important a part in many of the scenes, which are so strongly illustrated by her conversation and letters. It is only necessary to add that the papers which I have arranged were received from Her Highness amidst the disasters which were now thickening around her and her royal friends.

the destruction of all potentates who presume to follow his fallacious plan of forming individuals to a system instead of accommodating systems to individuals. The fruits from Southern climes have been reared in the North, but without their native virtue or vigour. It is more dangerous to attack the habits of men than their religion.
The British Constitution, though a blessing to Englishmen, is very ill-suited to nations not accustomed to the climate and its variations. Every country has peculiarities of thought and manners resulting from the physical influence of its sky and soil. Whenever we lose sight of this truth, we naturally lose the affections of those whose habits we counteract.

Section 16

From the time I left Passy till my final departure from Paris for Italy, which took place on the 2nd of August, 1792, my residence was almost exclusively at the capital. The faithful driver, who had given such proofs of probity, continued to be of great service, and was put in perpetual requisition. I was daily about on the business of the Queen and the Princess, always disguised, and most frequently as a drummerboy; on which occasions the driver and my man servant were my companions. My principal occupation was to hear and take down the debates of the Assembly, and convey and receive letters from the Queen to the Princesse de Lamballe, to and from Barnave, Bertrand de Moleville, Alexandre de Lameth, Deport de Fertre, Duportail, Montmorin, Turbo, De Mandat, the Duc de Brissac, etc., with whom my illustrious patronesses kept up a continued correspondence, to which I believe all of them fell a sacrifice; for, owing to the imprudence of the King in not removing their communications when he removed the rest of his papers from the Tuileries, the exposure of their connections with the Court was necessarily consequent upon the plunder of the palace on the 10th of August, 1792.

In my masquerade visits to the Assembly, I got acquainted with an editor of one of the papers; I think he told me his name was Duplessie. Being pleased with the liveliness of my remarks on some of the organized disorders, as I termed them, and with some comments I made upon the meanness of certain disgusting speeches on the patriotic gifts, my new acquaintance suffered me to take copies of his own shorthand remarks and reports. By this means the Queen and the Princess had them before they appeared in print. M. Duplessie was on other occasions of great service to me, especially as a protector in the mobs, for my man servant and the honest driver were so much occupied in watching the movements of the various faubourg factions, that I was often left entirely unattended.

The horrors of the Tuileries, both by night and day, were now grown appallingly beyond description. Almost unendurable as they had been before, they were aggravated by the insults of the national guard to every passenger to and from the palace. I was myself in so much peril, that the Princess thought it necessary to procure a trusty person, of tried courage, to see me through the throngs, with a large bandbox of all sorts of fashionable millinery, as the mode of ingress and egress least liable to excite suspicion.

Thus equipped, and guarded by my cicisbeo, I one day found myself, on entering the Tuileries, in the midst of an immense mob of regular trained rioters, who, seeing me go towards the palace, directed their attention entirely to me. They took me for some one belonging to the Queen’s milliner, Madame Bertin, who, they said, was fattening upon the public misery, through the Queen’s extravagance. The poor Queen herself they called by names so opprobious that decency will not suffer me to repeat them.

With a volley of oaths, pressing upon us, they bore us to another part of the garden, for the purpose of compelling us to behold six or eight of the most infamous outcasts, amusing themselves, in a state of exposure, with their accursed hands and arms tinged with blood up to the elbows. The spot they had chosen for this exhibition of their filthy persons was immediately before the windows of the apartments of the Queen and the ladies of the Court. Here they paraded up and down, to the great entertainment of a throng of savage rebels, by whom they were applauded and encouraged with shouts of “Bis! bis!” signifying in English,” Again! again!”

The demoniac interest excited by this scene withdrew the attention of those who were enjoying it from me, and gave me the opportunity of escaping unperceived, merely with the loss of my bandbox. Of that the infuriated mob made themselves masters; and the hats, caps, bonnets, and other articles of female attire, were placed on the parts of their degraded carcases, which, for the honour of human nature, should have been shot.

Overcome with agony at these insults, I burst from the garden in a flood of tears. On passing the gate, I was accosted by a person who exclaimed in a tone of great kindness, “Qu’as tu, ma bonne? qu’est ce qui vous afflige?” Knowing the risk I should run in representing the real cause of my concern, I immediately thought of ascribing it to the loss of the property of which I had been plundered. I told him I was a poor milliner, and had been robbed of everything I possessed in the world by the mob. “Come back with me,” said he, “and I will have it restored to you.” I knew it was of no avail, but policy stimulated me to comply; and I returned with him into the garden toward the palace.

What should I have felt, had I been aware, when this man came up, that I was accosted by the villain Danton! The person who was with me knew him, but dared not speak, and watched a chance of escaping in the crowd for fear of being discovered. When I looked round and found myself alone, I said I had lost my brother in the confusion, which added to my grief.

“Oh, never mind,” said Danton; “take hold of my arm; no one shall molest you. We will look for your brother, and try to recover your things;” and on we went together: I, weeping, I may truly say, for my life, stopped at every step, while he related my doleful story to all whose curiosity was excited by my grief.

On my appearing arm in arm with Danton before the windows of the Queen’s apartments, we were observed by Her Majesty and the Princesses. Their consternation and perplexity, as well as alarm for my safety, may readily be conceived. A signal from the window instantly apprised me that I might enter the palace, to which my return had been for some time impatiently expected.

Finding it could no longer be of any service to carry on the farce of seeking my pretended brother, I begged to be escorted out of the mob to the apartments of the Princesse de Lamballe.

“Oh,” said Danton, “certainly! and if you had only told the people that you were going to that good Princess, I am sure your things would not have been taken from you. But,” added he, “are you perfectly certain they were not for that detestable Marie Antoinette?”

“Oh!” I replied, “quite, quite certain!” All this while the mob was at my heels.

“Then,” said he, “I will not leave you till you are safe in the apartments of the Princesse de Lamballe, and I will myself make known to her your loss: she is so good,” continued he, “that I am convinced she will make you just compensation.”

I then told him how much I should be obliged by his doing so, as I had been commissioned to deliver the things, and if I was made to pay for them, the loss would be more serious than I could bear.

“Bah! bah!” exclaimed he. “Laissez moi faire! Laissez moi faire!”

When he came to the inner door, which I pretended to know nothing about, he told the gentleman of the chamber his name, and said he wished to see his mistress.

Her Highness came in a few minutes, and from her looks and visible agitation at the sight of Danton, I feared she would have betrayed both herself and me. However, while he was making a long preamble, I made signs, from which she inferred that all was safe.

When Danton had finished telling her the story, she calmly said to me, “Do you recollect, child, the things you have been robbed of?”

I replied that, if I had pen and ink, I could even set down the prices.

“Oh, well, then, child, come in,” said Her Highness, “and we will see what is to be done!”

“There!” exclaimed Danton; “Did I not tell you this before?” Then, giving me a hearty squeeze of the hand, he departed, and thus terminated the millinery speculation, which, I have no doubt, cost Her Highness a tolerable sum.

As soon as he was gone, the Princess said, “For Heaven’s sake, tell me the whole of this affair candidly; for the Queen has been in the greatest agitation at the bare idea of your knowing Danton, ever since we first saw you walking with him! He is one of our moat inveterate enemies.”

I said that if they had but witnessed one half of the scenes that I saw, I was sure their feelings would have been shocked beyond description. “We did not see all, but we heard too much for the ears of our sex.”

I then related the particulars of our meeting to Her Highness, who observed, “This accident, however unpleasant, may still turn out to our advantage. This fellow believes you to be a marchande de modes, and the circumstance of his having accompanied you to my apartment will enable you, in future, to pass to and from the Pavilion unmolested by the national guard.”

With tears of joy in her eyes for my safety, she could not, however, help laughing when I told her the farce I kept up respecting the loss of my brother, and my bandbox with the millinery, for which I was also soon congratulated most graciously by Her Majesty, who much applauded my spirit and presence of mind, and condescended, immediately, to entrust me with letters of the greatest importance, for some of the most distinguished members of the Assembly, with which I left the palace in triumph, but taking care to be ready with a proper story of my losses.

When I passed the guard-room, I was pitied by the very wretches, who, perhaps, had already shared in the spoils; and who would have butchered me, no doubt, into the bargain, could they have penetrated the real object of my mission. They asked me if I had been paid for the loss I sustained. I told them I had not, but I was promised that it should be settled.

“Settled!” said one of the wretches. “Get the money as soon as you can. Do not trust to promises of its being settled. They will all be settled themselves soon!”

The next day, on going to the palace, I found the Princesse de Lamballe in the greatest agitation, from the accounts the Court had just received of the murder of a man belonging to Arthur Dillon, and of the massacres at Nantes.

“The horrid prints, pamphlets, and caricatures,” cried she, “daily exhibited under the very windows of the Tuileries, against His Majesty, the Queen, the Austrian party, and the Coblentz party, the constant thwarting of every plan, and these last horrors at Nantes, have so overwhelmed the King that he is nearly become a mere automaton. Daily and nightly execrations are howled in his ears. Look at our boasted deliverers! The poor Queen, her children, and all of us belonging to the palace, are in danger of our lives at merely being seen; while they by whom we have been so long buoyed up with hope are quarrelling amongst themselves for the honour and etiquette of precedency, leaving us to the fury of a race of cannibals, who know no mercy, and will have destroyed us long before their disputes of etiquette can be settled.”

The utterance of Her Highness while saying this was rendered almost inarticulate by her tears.

“What support against internal disorganization,” continued she, “is to be expected from so disorganized a body as the present army of different nations, having all different interests?”

I said there was no doubt that the Prussian army was on its march, and would soon be joined by that of the Princes and of Austria.

“You speak as you wish, mia cara Inglesina, but it is all to no purpose. Would to God they had never been applied to, never been called upon to interfere. Oh, that Her Majesty could have been persuaded to listen to Dumourier and some other of the members, instead of relying on succours which, I fear, will never enter Paris in our lifetime! No army can subdue a nation; especially a nation frenzied by the recent recovery of its freedom and independence from the shackles of a corrupt and weak administration. The King is too good; the Queen has no equal as to heart; but they have both been most grossly betrayed. The royalists on one side, the constitutionalists on the other, will be the victims of the Jacobins, for they are the most powerful, they are the most united, they possess the most talent, and they act in a body, and not merely for the time being. Believe me, my dear, their plans are too well grounded to be defeated, as every one framed by the fallacious constitutionalists and mad-headed royalists has been; and so they will ever be while they continue to form two separate interests. From the very first moment when these two bodies were worked upon separately, I told the Queen that, till they were united for the same object, the monarchy would be unsafe, and at the mercy of the Jacobins, who, from hatred to both parties, would overthrow it themselves to rule despotically over those whom they no longer respected or feared, but whom they hated, as considering them both equally their former oppressors.

“May the All-seeing Power,” continued Her Highness, “grant, for the good of this shattered State, that I may be mistaken, and that my predictions may prove different in the result; but of this I see no hope, unless in the strength of our own internal resources. God knows how powerful they might prove could they be united at this moment! But from the anarchy and division kept up between them, I see no prospect of their being brought to bear, except in a general overthrow of this, as you have justly observed, organized system of disorders, from which at some future period we may obtain a solid, systematic order of government. Would Charles the Second ever have reigned after the murder of his father had England been torn to pieces by different factions? No! It was the union of the body of the nation for its internal tranquillity, the amalgamation of parties against domestic faction, which gave vigour to the arm of power, and enabled the nation to check foreign interference abroad, while it annihilated anarchy at home. By that means the Protector himself laid the first stone of the Restoration. The division of a nation is the surest harbinger of success to its invaders, the death-blow to its Sovereign’s authority, and the total destruction of that innate energy by which alone a country can obtain the dignity of its own independence.”

Section 17

While Her Highness was thus pondering on the dreadful situation of France, strengthening her arguments by those historical illustrations, which, from the past, enabled her to look into the future, a message came to her from Her Majesty. She left me, and, in a few minutes, returned to her apartment, accompanied by the Queen and Her Royal Highness the Princesse Elizabeth. I was greatly surprised at seeing these two illustrious and august personages bathed in tears. Of course, I could not be aware of any new motive to create any new or extraordinary emotion; yet there was in the countenances of all of the party an appearance different from anything I had ever witnessed in them, or any other person before; a something which seemed to say, they no longer had any affinity with the rest of earthly beings.

They had all been just writing to their distant friends and relations. A fatal presentiment, alas! too soon verified, told them it was for the last time.

Her Highness the Princesse de Lamballe now approached me.

“Her Majesty,” observed the Princess, “wishes to give you a mark of her esteem, in delivering to you, with her own hands, letters to her family, which it is her intention to entrust to your especial care.

“On this step Her Majesty has resolved, as much to send you out of the way of danger, as from the conviction occasioned by the firm reliance your conduct has created in us, that you will faithfully obey the orders you may receive, and execute our intentions with that peculiar intelligence which the emergency of the case requires.

“But even the desirable opportunity which offers, through you, for the accomplishment of her mission, might not have prevailed with Her Majesty to hasten your departure, had not the wretch Danton twice inquired at the palace for the ‘little milliner,’ whom he rescued and conducted safe to the apartments of the Pavilion of Flora. This, probably, may be a matter of no real consequence whatever; but it is our duty to avoid danger, and it has been decided that you should, at least for a time, absent Paris.

“Per cio, mia cara Inglesina, speak now, freely and candidly: is it your wish to return to England, or go elsewhere? For though we are all sorry to lose you, yet it would be a source of still greater sorrow to us, prizing your services and fidelity as we do, should any plans and purposes of ours lead you into difficulty or embarrassment.”

“Oh, mon Dieu! c’est vrai!” interrupted Her Majesty, her eyes at the same time filled with tears.

“I should never forgive myself,” continued the Princess, “if I should prove the cause of any misfortune to you.”

“Nor I!” most graciously subjoined the Queen.

“Therefore,” pursued the Princess, “speak your mind without reserve.”

Here my own feelings, and the sobs of the illustrious party, completely overcame me, and I could not proceed. The Princesse de Lamballe clasped me in her arms. “Not only letters,” exclaimed she, “but my life I would trust to the fidelity of my vera, verissima, cara Inglesina! And now,” continued Her Highness, turning round to the Queen, “will it please Your Majesty to give Inglesina your commands.”

“Here, then,” said the Queen, “is a letter for my dear sister, the Queen of Naples, which you must deliver into her own hands. Here is another for my sister, the Duchess of Parma. If she should not be at Parma, you will find her at Colorno. This is for my brother, the Archduke of Milan; this for my sister-in-law, the Princesse Clotilde Piedmont, at Turin; and here are four others. You will take off the envelope when you get to Turin, and then put them into the post yourself. Do not give them to, or send them by, any person whatsoever.

“Tell my sisters the state of Paris. Inform them of our cruel situation. Describe the riots and convulsions you have seen. Above all, assure them how dear they are to me, and how much I love them.”

At the word love, Her Majesty threw herself on a sofa and wept bitterly.

The Princesse Elizabeth gave me a letter for her sister, and two for her aunts, to be delivered to them, if at Rome; but if not, to be put under cover and sent through the post at Rome to whatever place they might have made their residence.

I had also a packet of letters to deliver for the Princesse de Lamballe at Turin; and another for the Duc de Serbelloni at Milan.

Her Majesty and the Princesse Elizabeth not only allowed me the honour to kiss their hands, but they, both gave me their blessing, and good wishes for my safe return, and then left me with the Princesse de Lamballe.

Her Majesty had scarcely left the apartment of the Princess, when I recollected she had forgotten to give me the cipher and the key for the letters. The Princess immediately went to the Queen’s apartment, and returned with them shortly after.

“Now that we are alone,” said Her Highness, “I will tell you what Her Majesty has graciously commanded me to signify to you in her royal name. The Queen commands me to say that you are provided for for life; and that, on the first vacancy which may occur, she intends fixing you at Court.

“Therefore mia cara Inglesina, take especial care what you are about, and obey Her Majesty’s wishes when you are absent, as implicitly as you have hitherto done all her commands during your abode near her. You are not to write to any one. No one is to be made acquainted with your route. You are not to leave Paris in your own carriage. It will be sent after you by your man servant, who is to join you at Chalon sur Saone.

“I have further to inform you that Her Majesty the Queen, on sending you the cipher, has at the same time graciously condescended to add these presents as further marks of her esteem.”

Her Highness then showed me a most beautiful gold watch, chain and seals.

“These,” said she, placing them with her own hands, “Her Majesty desired me to put round your neck in testimony of her regard.”

At the same time Her Highness presented me, on her own part, with a beautiful pocketbook, the covers of which were of gold enamelled, with the word “SOUVENIR” in diamonds on one side, and a large cipher of her own initials on the other. The first page contained the names of the Queen and Her Royal Highness the Princesse Elizabeth, in their own handwriting. There was a cheque in it on a Swiss banker, at Milan, of the name of Bonny.

Having given me these invaluable tokens, Her Highness proceeded with her instructions.

“At Chalon,” continued she, “mia cara, your man servant will perhaps bring you other letters. Take two places in the stage for yourself and your femme de chambre, in her name, and give me the memorandum, that our old friend, the driver, may procure the passports. You must not

be seen; for there is no doubt that Danton has given the police a full description of your person. Now go and prepare: we shall see each other again before your departure."

Only a few minutes afterwards my man servant came to me to say that it would be some hours before the stage would set off, and that there was a lady in her carriage waiting for me in the Bois de Boulogne. I hastened thither. What was my surprise on finding it was the Princess. I now saw her for the last time!

Let me pass lightly over this sad moment. I must not, however, dismiss the subject, without noticing the visible changes which had taken place in the short space of a month, in the appearance of all these illustrious Princesses. Their very complexions were no longer the same, as if grief had changed the whole mass of their blood. The Queen, in particular, from the month of July to the 2d of August, looked ten years older. The other two Princesses were really worn out with fatigue, anxiety, and the want of rest, as, during the whole month of July, they scarcely ever slept, for fear of being murdered in their beds, and only threw themselves on them, now and then, without undressing. The King, three or four times in the night, would go round to their different apartments, fearful they might be destroyed in their sleep, and ask, "Etes vous la?" when they would answer him from within, "Nous sommes encore ici." Indeed, if, when nature was exhausted, sleep by chance came to the relief of their worn-out and languid frames, it was only to awaken them to fresh horrors, which constantly threatened the convulsion by which they were finally annihilated.

It would be uncandid in me to be silent concerning the marked difference I found in the feelings of the two royal sisters of Her Majesty.

I had never had the honour before to execute any commissions for her Royal Highness the Duchess of Parma, and, of course, took that city in my way to Naples.

I did not reach Parma till after the horrors which had taken place at the Tuileries on the 10th of August, 1792. The whole of the unfortunate Royal Family of France were then lodged in the Temple. There was not a feeling heart in Europe unmoved at their afflicting situation.

I arrived at Colorno, the country residence of the Duchess of Parma, just as Her Royal Highness was going out on horseback.

I ordered my servant to inform one of the pages that I came by express from Paris, and requested the honour to know when it would be convenient for Her Royal Highness to allow me a private audience, as I was going, post-haste, to Rome and Naples. Of course, I did not choose to tell my business either to my own or Her Royal Highness's servant, being in honour and duty bound to deliver the letter and the verbal message of her then truly unfortunate sister in person and in privacy.

The mention of Paris I saw somewhat startled and confused her. Meantime, she came near enough to my carriage for me to say to her in German, in order that none of the servants, French or Italian, might understand, that I had a letter to deliver into her own hands, without saying from whom.

She then desired I would alight, and she soon followed me; and, after having very graciously ordered me some refreshments, asked me from whom I had been sent.

I delivered Her Majesty's letter. Before she opened it, she exclaimed, "'O Dio! tutto e perduto e troppo tardi'! Oh, God! all is lost, it is too late!" I then gave her the cipher and the key. In a few minutes I enabled her to decipher the letter. On getting through it, she again exclaimed, "'E tutto inutile'! it is entirely useless! I am afraid they are all lost. I am sorry you are so situated as not to allow of your remaining here to rest from your fatigue. Whenever you come to Parma, I shall be glad to see you."

She then took out her pocket handkerchief, shed a few tears, and said that, as circumstances were now so totally changed, to answer the letter might only commit her, her sister, and myself; but that if affairs took the turn she wished, no doubt, her sister would write again. She then mounted her horse, and wished me a good journey; and I took leave, and set off for Rome.

I must confess that the conduct of the Duchess of Parma appeared to me rather cold, if not unfeeling. Perhaps she was afraid of showing too much emotion, and wished to encourage the idea that Princesses ought not to give way to sensibility, like common mortals.

But how different was the conduct of the Queen of Naples! She kissed the letter: she bathed it with her tears! Scarcely could she allow herself time to decipher it. At every sentence she exclaimed, “Oh, my dear, oh, my adored sister! What will become of her! My brothers are now both no more! Surely, she will soon be liberated!” Then, turning suddenly to me, she asked with eagerness, “Do you not think she will? Oh, Marie, Marie! why did she not fly to Vienna? Why did she not come to me instead of writing? Tell me, for God’s sake, all you know!”

I said I knew nothing further of what had taken place at Paris, having travelled night and day, except what I had heard from the different couriers, which I had met and stopped on my route; but I hoped to be better informed by Sir William Hamilton, as all my letters were to be sent from France to Turin, and thence on to Sir William at Naples; and if I found no letters with him, I should immediately set off and return to Turin or Milan, to be as near France as possible for my speedy return if necessary. I ventured to add that it was my earnest prayer that all the European Sovereigns would feel the necessity of interesting themselves for the Royal Family of France, with whose fate the fate of monarchy throughout Europe might be interwoven.

“Oh, God of Heaven!” cried the Queen, “all that dear family may ere now have been murdered! Perhaps they are already numbered among the dead! Oh, my poor, dear, beloved Marie! Oh, I shall go frantic! I must send for General Acton.”

Wringing her hands, she pulled the bell, and in a few minutes the general came. On his entering the apartment, she flew to him like one deprived of reason.

“There!” exclaimed she. “There! Behold the fatal consequences!” showing him the letter. “Louis XVI. is in the state of Charles the First of England, and my sister will certainly be murdered.”

“No, no, no!” exclaimed the general. “Something will be done. Calm yourself, madame.” Then turning to me, “When,” said he, “did you leave Paris?”

“When all was lost!” interrupted the Queen.

“Nay,” cried the general; “pray let me speak. All is not lost, you will find; have but a little patience.”

“Patience!” said the Queen. “For two years I have heard of nothing else. Nothing has been done for these unfortunate beings.” She then threw herself into a chair. “Tell him!” cried she to me, “tell him! tell him!”

I then informed the general that I had left Paris on the 2d of August, but did not believe at the time, though the daily riots were horrible, that such a catastrophe could have occurred so soon as eight days after.

The Queen was now quite exhausted, and General Acton rang the bell for the lady-in-waiting, who entered accompanied by the Duchesse Curigliano Marini, and they assisted Her Majesty to bed.

When she had retired, “Do not,” said the general to me, “do not go to Sir William’s to-night. He is at Caserte. You seem too much fatigued.”

“More from grief,” replied I, “and reflection on the fatal consequences that might result to the great personages I have so lately left, than from the journey.”

“Take my advice,” resumed he. “You had much better go to bed and rest yourself. You look very ill.”

I did as he recommended, and went to the nearest hotel I could find. I felt no fatigue of mind or body till I had got into bed, where I was confined for several days with a most violent fever. During my illness I received every attention both from the Court, and our Ambassador and Lady Hamilton, who kindly visited me every day. The Queen of Naples I never again saw till my return in 1793, after the murder of the Queen of France; and I am glad I did not, for her agony would have acted anew upon my disordered frame, and might have proved fatal.

I was certainly somewhat prepared for a difference of feeling between the two Princesses, as the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, in the letters to the Queen of Naples, always wrote, “To my much beloved sister, the Queen of the two Sicilies, etc.,” and to the other, merely, “To the Duchess of Parma, etc.” But I could never have dreamt of a difference so little flattering, under such circumstances, to the Duchess of Parma.

Section 18

From the moment of my departure from Paris on the 2d of August, 1792, the tragedy hastened to its denouement. On the night of the 9th, the tocsin was sounded, and the King and the Royal Family looked upon their fate as sealed. Notwithstanding the personal firmness of His Majesty, he was a coward for others. He dreaded the responsibility of ordering blood to be shed, even in defence of his nearest and dearest interests. Petion, however, had given the order to repel force by force to De Mandat, who was murdered upon the steps of the Hotel de Ville. It has been generally supposed that Petion had received a bribe for not ordering the cannon against the Tuileries on the night of the 9th, and that De Mandat was massacred by the agents of Petion for the purpose of extinguishing all proof that he was only acting under the instructions of the Mayor.

I shall not undertake to judge of the propriety of the King's impression that there was no safety from the insurgents but in the hall, and under the protection of the Assembly. Had the members been well disposed towards him, the event might have proved very different. But there is one thing certain. The Queen would never have consented to this step but to save the King and her innocent children. She would have preferred death to the humiliation of being under obligations to her sworn enemies; but she was overcome by the King declaring, with tears in his eyes, that he would not quit the palace without her. The Princesses Elizabeth and de Lamballe fell at her feet, implored Her Majesty to obey the King, and assured her there was no alternative between instant death and refuge from it in the Assembly. "Well," said the Queen, "if our lot be death, let us away to receive it with the national sanction."

I need not expatiate on the succession of horrors which now overwhelmed the royal sufferers. Their confinement at the Feuillans, and their subsequent transfer to the Temple, are all topics sufficiently enlarged upon by many who were actors in the scenes to which they led. The Princesse de Lamballe was, while it was permitted, the companion of their captivity. But the consolation of her society was considered too great to be continued. Her fate had no doubt been predetermined; and, unwilling to await the slow proceedings of a trial, which it was thought politic should precede the murder of her royal mistress, it was found necessary to detach her from the wretched inmates of the Temple, in order to have her more completely within the control of the miscreants, who hated her for her virtues. The expedient was resorted to of casting suspicion upon the correspondence which Her Highness kept up with the exterior of the prison, for the purpose of obtaining such necessaries as were required, in consequence of the utter destitution in which the Royal Family retired from the Tuileries. Two men, of the names of Devine and Priquet, were bribed to create a suspicion, by their informations against the Queen's female attendant. The first declared that on the 18th of August, while he was on duty near the cell of the King, he saw a woman about eleven o'clock in the day come from a room in the centre, holding in one hand three letters, and with the other cautiously opening the door of the right-hand chamber, whence she presently came back without the letters and returned into the centre chamber. He further asserted that twice, when this woman opened the door, he distinctly saw a letter half-written, and every evidence of an eagerness to hide it from observation. The second informant, Priquet, swore that, while on duty as morning sentinel on the gallery between the two towers, he saw, through the window of the central chamber, a woman writing with great earnestness and alarm during the whole time he was on guard.

All the ladies were immediately summoned before the authorities. The hour of the separation between the Princess and her royal friend accorded with the solemnity of the circumstance. It was nearly midnight when they were torn asunder, and they never met again.

The examinations were all separate. That of the Princesse de Lamballe was as follows:

Q. Your name?

A. Marie-Therese-Louise de Savoy, Bourbon Lamballe.

Q. What do you know of the events which occurred on the 10th of August?

A. Nothing.

Q. Where did you pass that day?

A. As a relative I followed the King to the National Assembly.

Q. Were you in bed on the nights of the 9th and 10th?

A. No.

Q. Where were you then?

A. In my apartments, at the chateau.

Q. Did you not go to the apartments of the King in the course of that night?

A. Finding there was a likelihood of a commotion, went thither towards one in the morning.

Q. You were aware, then, that the people had arisen?

A. I learnt it from hearing the tocsin.

Q. Did you see the Swiss and National Guards, who passed the night on the terrace?

A. I was at the window, but saw neither.

Q. Was the King in his apartment when you went thither?

A. There were a great number of persons in the room, but not the King.

Q. Did you know of the Mayor of Paris being at the Tuileries?

A. I heard he was there.

Q. At what hour did the King go to the National Assembly?

A. Seven.

Q. Did he not, before he went, review the troops? Do you know the oath he made them swear?

A. I never heard of any oath.

Q. Have you any knowledge of cannon being mounted and pointed in the apartments?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever seen Messrs. Mandat and d'Affry in the chateau?

A. No.

Q. Do you know the secret doors of the Tuileries?

A. I know of no such doors.

Q. Have you not, since you have been in the Temple, received and written letters, which you sought to send away secretly?

A. I have never received or written any letters, excepting such as have been delivered to the municipal officer.

Q. Do you know anything of an article of furniture which is making for Madame Elizabeth?

A. No.

Q. Have you not recently received some devotional books?

A. No.

Q. What are the books which you have at the Temple?

A. I have none.

Q. Do you know anything of a barred staircase?

A. No.

Q. What general officers did you see at the Tuileries, on the nights of the 9th and 10th?

A. I saw no general officers, I only saw M. Roederer.

For thirteen hours was Her Highness, with her female companions in misfortune, exposed to these absurd forms, and to the gaze of insulting and malignant curiosity. At length, about the middle of the day, they were told that it was decreed that they should be detained till further orders, leaving them the choice of prisons, between that of la Force and of la Salpetriere.

Her Highness immediately decided on the former. It was at first determined that she should be separated from Madame de Tourzel, but humanity so far prevailed as to permit the consolation of her society, with that of others of her friends and fellow-sufferers, and for a moment the Princess enjoyed the only comfort left to her, that of exchanging sympathy with her partners in affliction. But the cell to which she was doomed proved her last habitation upon earth.

On the 1st of September the Marseillois began their murderous operations. Three hundred persons in two days massacred upwards of a thousand defence less prisoners, confined under the pretext of malpractices against the State, or rather devotedness to the royal cause. The spirit which produced the massacres of the prisons at Paris extended them through the principal towns and cities all over France.

Even the universal interest felt for the Princesse de Lamballe was of no avail against this frenzy. I remember once (as if it were from a presentiment of what was to occur) the King observing to her, “I never knew any but fools and sycophants who could keep themselves clear from the lash of public censure. How is it, then, that you, my dear Princess, who are neither, contrive to steer your bark on this dangerous coast without running against the rocks on which so many good vessels like your own have been dashed to pieces?” “Oh, Sire,” replied Her Highness, “my time is not yet come—I am not dead yet!” Too soon, and too horribly, her hour did come!

The butchery of the prisons was now commenced. The Duc de Penthievre set every engine in operation to save his beloved daughter-in-law. He sent for Manuel, who was then Procureur of Paris. The Duke declared that half his fortune should be Manuel’s if he could but save the Princesse de Lamballe and the ladies who were in the same prison with her from the general massacre. Manuel promised the Duke that he would instantly set about removing them all

from the reach of the blood-hunters. He began with those whose removal was least likely to attract attention, leaving the Princesse de Lamballe, from motives of policy, to the last.

Meanwhile, other messengers had been dispatched to different quarters for fear of failure with Manuel. It was discovered by one of these that the atrocious tribunal,—[Thibaudeau, Hebert, Simonier, etc.]—who sat in mock judgment upon the tenants of these gloomy abodes, after satiating themselves with every studied insult they could devise, were to pronounce the word "libre!" It was naturally presumed that the predestined victims, on hearing this tempting sound, and seeing the doors at the same moment set open by the clerks of the infamous court, would dart off in exultation, and, fancying themselves liberated, rush upon the knives of the barbarians, who were outside, in waiting for their blood! Hundreds were thus slaughtered.

To save the Princess from such a sacrifice, it was projected to prevent her from appearing before the tribunal, and a belief was encouraged that means would be devised to elude the necessity. The person who interested himself for her safety contrived to convey a letter containing these words: "Let what will happen, for God's sake do not quit your cell. You will be spared. Adieu."

Manuel, however, who knew not of this cross arrangement, was better informed than its projector.

He was aware it would be impossible for Her Highness to escape from appearing before the tribunal. He had already removed her companions. The Princesse de Tarente, the Marquise de Tourzel, her daughter, and others, were in safety. But when, true to his promise, he went to the Princesse de Lamballe, she would not be prevailed upon to quit her cell. There was no time for parley. The letter prevailed, and her fate was inevitable.

The massacre had begun at daybreak. The fiends had been some hours busy in the work of death. The piercing shrieks of the dying victims brought the Princess and her remaining companion upon their knees, in fervent prayer for the souls of the departed. The messengers of the tribunal now appeared. The Princess was compelled to attend the summons. She went, accompanied by her faithful female attendant.

A glance at the seas of blood, of which she caught a glimpse upon her way to the Court, had nearly shocked her even to sudden death. Would it had! She staggered, but was sustained by her companion. Her courage triumphed. She appeared before the gore-stained tribunes.

After some questions of mere form, Her Highness was commanded to swear to be faithful to the new order of government, and to hate the King, the Queen, and royalty.

"To the first," replied Her Highness, "I willingly submit. To the second, how can I accede? There is nothing of which I can accuse the Royal Family. To hate them is against my nature. They are my Sovereigns. They are my friends and relations. I have served them for many years, and never have I found reason for the slightest complaint."

The Princess could no longer articulate. She fell into the arms of her attendant. The fatal signal was pronounced. She recovered, and, crossing the court of the prison, which was bathed with the blood of mutilated victims, involuntarily exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! What a sight is this!" and fell into a fit.

Nearest to her in the mob stood a mulatto, whom she had caused to be baptized, educated, and maintained; but whom, for ill-conduct, she had latterly excluded from her presence. This miscreant struck at her with his halbert. The blow removed her cap. Her luxuriant hair (as if to hide her angelic beauty from the sight of the murderers, pressing tiger-like around to pollute that form, the virtues of which equalled its physical perfection)—her luxuriant hair fell around and veiled her a moment from view. An individual, to whom I was nearly allied,

seeing the miscreants somewhat staggered, sprang forward to the rescue; but the mulatto wounded him. The Princess was lost to all feeling from the moment the monster first struck at her. But the demons would not quit their prey. She expired gashed with wounds.

Scarcely was the breath out of her body, when the murderers cut off her head. One party of them fixed it, like that of the vilest traitor, on an immense pole, and bore it in triumph all over Paris; while another division of the outrageous cannibals were occupied in tearing her clothes piecemeal from her mangled corpse. The beauty of that form, though headless, mutilated and reeking with the hot blood of their foul crime—how shall I describe it?—excited that atrocious excess of lust, which impelled these hordes of assassins to satiate their demoniac passions upon the remains of this virtuous angel.

This incredible crime being perpetrated, the wretches fastened ropes round the body, arms, and legs, and dragged it naked through the streets of Paris, till no vestige remained by which it could be distinguished as belonging to the human species; and then left it among the hundreds of innocent victims of that awful day, who were heaped up to putrefy in one confused and disgusting mass.

The head was reserved for other purposes of cruelty and horror. It was first borne to the Temple, beneath the windows of the royal prisoners. The wretches who were hired daily to insult them in their dens of misery, by proclaiming all the horrors vomited from the national Vesuvius, were commissioned to redouble their howls of what had befallen the Princesse de Lamballe.[46]

The Queen sprang up at the name of her friend. She heard subjoined to, it, “la voila en triomphe,” and then came shouts and laughter. She looked out. At a distance she perceived something like a Bacchanalian procession, and thought, as she hoped, that the Princess was coming to her in triumph from her prison, and her heart rejoiced in the anticipation of once more being, blessed with her society. But the King, who had seen and heard more distinctly from his apartment, flew to that of the Queen. That the horrid object might not escape observation, the monsters had mounted upon each other’s shoulders so as to lift the bleeding head quite up to the prison bars. The King came just in time to snatch Her Majesty from the spot, and thus she was prevented from seeing it. He took her up in his arms and carried her to a distant part of the Temple, but the mob pursued her in her retreat, and howled the fatal truth even at her, very door, adding that her head would be the next, the nation would require. Her Majesty fell into violent hysterics. The butchers of human flesh continued in the interior of the Temple, parading the triumph of their assassination, until the shrieks of the Princesse Elizabeth at the state in which she saw the Queen, and serious fears for the safety of the royal prisoners, aroused the commandant to treble the national guards and chase the barbarians to the outside, where they remained for hours.

[46] *These horrid circumstances I had from the Chevalier Clery, who was the only attendant allowed to assist Louis XVI. and his unhappy family, during their last captivity; but who was banished from the Temple as soon as his royal master was beheaded, and never permitted to return. Clery told me all this when I met him at Pyrmont, in Germany. He was then in attendance upon the late Comtesse de Lisle, wife of Louie XVIII., at whose musical parties I had often the honour of assisting, when on a visit to the beautiful Duchesse de Guiche. On returning to Paris from Germany, on my way back into Italy, I met the wife of Clery, and her friend M. Beaumont, both old friends of mine, who confirmed Clery’s statement, and assured me they were all for two years in hourly expectation of being sent to the Place de Greve for execution. The death of Robespierre saved their lives.*
Madame Clery taught Marie Antoinette to play upon the harp. Madame Beaumont was a natural daughter of Louis XV. I had often occasion to be in their agreeable society; and, as might be expected, their minds were stored with the most authentic anecdotes and information upon the topics of the day.

Section 19

It now remains for me to complete my record by a few facts and observations relating to the illustrious victims who a short time survived the Princesse de Lamballe. I shall add to this painful narrative some details which have been mentioned to me concerning their remorseless persecutors, who were not long left unpursued by just and awful retribution. Having done this, I shall dismiss the subject.

The execrable and sacrilegious modern French Pharisees, who butchered, on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of September, 1792, all the prisoners at Paris, by these massacres only gave the signal for the more diabolical machinations which led to the destruction of the still more sacred victims of the 21st of January, and the 16th of October, 1793, and the myriads who followed.

The King himself never had a doubt with regard to his ultimate fate. His only wish was to make it the means of emancipation for the Queen and Royal Family. It was his intention to appeal to the National Assembly upon the subject, after his trial. Such also was the particular wish of his saint-like sister, the Princesse Elizabeth, who imagined that an appeal under such circumstances could not be resisted. But the Queen strongly opposed the measure; and His Majesty said he should be loath, in the last moments of his painful existence, in anything to thwart one whom he loved so tenderly.

He had long accustomed himself, when he spoke of the Queen and royal infants, in deference to the temper of the times, only to say, “my wife and children.” They, as he told Clery, formed a tie, and the only one remaining, which still bound him to earth. Their last embraces, he said, went so to his aching heart, that he could even yet feel their little hands clinging about him, and see their streaming eyes, and hear their agonized and broken voices. The day previous to the fatal catastrophe, when permitted for the last time to see his family, the Princesse Elizabeth whispered him, not for herself, but for the Queen and his helpless innocents, to remember his intentions. He said he should not feel himself happy if, in his last hour, he did not give them a proof of his paternal affection, in obtaining an assurance that the sacrifice of his life should be the guarantee of theirs. So intent was his mind upon this purpose, said Clery to me, that when his assassins came to take him to the slaughtering-place, he said, “I hope my death will appease the nation, and that my innocent family, who have suffered on my account, will now be released.”

The ruffians answered, “The nation, always magnanimous, only seeks to punish the guilty. You may be assured your family will be respected.” Events have proved how well they kept their word.

It was to fulfil the intention of recommending his family to the people with his dying breath that he commenced his address upon the scaffold, when Santerre ordered the drums to drown his last accents, and the axe to fall!

The Princesse Elizabeth, and perhaps others of the royal prisoners, hoped he would have been reprieved, till Herbert, that real ‘Pere du chene’, with a smile upon his countenance, came triumphantly to announce to the disconsolate family that Louis was no more!

Perhaps there never was a King more misrepresented and less understood, especially by the immediate age in which he lived, than Louis XVI. He was the victim of natural timidity, increased by the horror of bloodshed, which the exigencies of the times rendered indispensable to his safety. He appeared weak in intellect, when he was only so from

circumstances. An overwrought anxiety to be just made him hesitate about the mode of overcoming the abuses, until its procrastination had destroyed the object of his wishes. He had courage sufficient, as well as decision, where others were not menaced and the danger was confined to himself; but, where his family or his people were involved, he was utterly unfit to give direction. The want of self-sufficiency in his own faculties have been his, and his throne's, ruin. He consulted those who caused him to swerve from the path his own better reason had dictated, and, in seeking the best course, he often chose the worst.

The same fatal timidity which pervaded his character extended to his manners. From being merely awkward, he at last became uncouth; but from the natural goodness of his heart, the nearest to him soon lost sight of his ungentleness from the rectitude of his intentions, and, to parody the poet, saw his deportment in his feelings.

Previous to the Revolution, Louis XVI. was generally considered gentle and affable, though never polished. But the numberless outrages suffered by his Queen, his family, his friends, and himself, especially towards the close of his career, soured him to an air of rudeness, utterly foreign to his nature and to his intention.

It must not be forgotten that he lived in a time of unprecedented difficulty. He was a lamb governing tigers. So far as his own personal bearing is concerned, who is there among his predecessors, that, replaced upon the throne, would have resisted the vicissitudes brought about by internal discord, rebellion, and riot, like himself? What said he when one of the heterogeneous, plebeian, revolutionary assemblies not only insulted him, but added to the insult a laugh? "If you think you can govern better, I am ready to resign," was the mild but firm reply of Louis.

How glorious would have been the triumph for the most civilized nation in the centre of Europe had the insulter taken him at his word. When the experimentalists did attempt to govern, we all know, and have too severely felt, the consequences. Yet this unfortunate monarch has been represented to the world as imbecile, and taxed with wanting character, firmness, and fortitude, because he has been vanquished! The despot-conqueror has been vanquished since!

His acquirements were considerable. His memory was remarkably retentive and well-stored,—a quality, I should infer from all I have observed, common to most Sovereigns. By the multiplicity of persons they are in the habit of seeing, and the vast variety of objects continually passing through their minds, this faculty is kept in perpetual exercise.

But the circumstance which probably injured Louis XVI. more than any other was his familiarity with the locksmith, Gamin. Innocent as was the motive whence it arose, this low connection lessened him more with the whole nation than if he had been the most vicious of Princes. How careful Sovereigns ought to be, with respect to the attention they bestow on men in humble life; especially those whose principles may have been demoralized by the meanness of the associations consequent upon their occupation, and whose low origin may have denied them opportunities of intellectual cultivation.

This observation map even be extended to the liberal arts. It does not follow because a monarch is fond of these that he should so far forget himself as to make their professors his boon companions. He loses ground whenever he places his inferiors on a level with himself. Men are estimated from the deference they pay to their own stations in society. The great Frederic of Prussia used to sap, "I must show myself a King, because my trade is royalty."

It was only in destitution and anguish that the real character of Louis developed itself. He was firm and patient, utterly regardless of himself, but wrung to the heart for others, not even excepting his deluded murderers. Nothing could swerve him from his trust in Heaven, and he

left a glorious example of how far religion can triumph over every calamity and every insult this world has power to inflict.

There was a national guard, who, at the time of the imprisonment of the Royal Family, was looked upon as the most violent of Jacobins, and the sworn enemy of royalty. On that account the sanguinary agents of the self-created Assembly employed him to frequent the Temple. His special commission was to stimulate the King and Royal Family by every possible argument to self-destruction.

But this man was a friend in disguise. He undertook the hateful office merely to render every service in his power, and convey regular information of the plots of the Assembly against those whom he was deputed to persecute. The better to deceive his companions, he would read aloud to the Royal Family all the debates of the regicides, which those who were with him encouraged, believing it meant to torture and insult, when the real motive was to prepare them to meet every accusation, by communicating to them each charge as it occurred. So thoroughly were the Assembly deceived, that the friendly guard was allowed free access to the apartments, in order to facilitate, as was imagined, his wish to agonize and annoy. By this means, he was enabled to caution the illustrious prisoners never to betray any emotion at what he read, and to rely upon his doing his best to soften the rigour of their fate.

The individual of whom I speak communicated these circumstances to me himself. He declared, also, that the Duc d'Orleans came frequently to the Temple during the imprisonment of Louis XVI., but, always in disguise; and never, till within a few days after the murder of the poor King, did he disclose himself. On that occasion he had bribed the men who were accustomed to light the fires, to admit him in their stead to the apartment of the Princesse Elizabeth. He found her on her knees, in fervent prayer for the departed soul of her beloved brother. He performed this office, totally unperceived by this predestined victim; but his courage was subdued by her piety. He dared not extend the stratagem to the apartment of the Queen. On leaving the angelic Princess, he was so overcome by remorse that he: requested my informant to give him a glass of water, saying, "that woman has unmanned me." It was by this circumstance he was discovered.

The Queen was immediately apprised by the good man of the occurrence.

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Her Majesty, "I thought once or twice that I had seen him at our miserable dinner hours, occupied with the other jailers at the outside door. I even mentioned the circumstance to Elizabeth, and she replied, "I also have observed a man resembling D'ORLEANS, but it cannot be he, for the man I noticed had a wooden leg."

"That was the very disguise he was discovered in this morning, when preparing, or pretending to prepare, the fire in the Princesse Elizabeth's apartment," replied the national guard.

"Merciful Heaven!" said the Queen, "is he not yet satisfied? Must he even satiate his barbarous brutality with being an eye-witness of the horrid state into which he has thrown us? Save me," continued Her Majesty, "oh, save me from contaminating my feeble sight, which is almost exhausted, nearly parched up for the loss of my dear husband, by looking on him!—Oh, death! come, come and release me from such a sight!"

"Luckily," observed the guard to me, "it was the hour of the general jail dinner, and we were alone; otherwise, I should infallibly have been discovered, as my tears fell faster than those of the Queen, for really hers seemed to be nearly exhausted: However," pursued he, "that D'ORLEANS did see the Queen, and that the Queen saw him, I am very sure. From what passed between them in the month of July, 1793, she was hurried off from the Temple to the common prison, to take her trial." This circumstance combined, with other motives, to make

the Assembly hasten the Duke's trial soon after, who had been sent with his young son to Marseilles, there being no doubt that he wished to rescue the Queen, so as to have her in his own power.

On the 16th of October, Her Majesty was beheaded. Her death was consistent with her life. She met her fate like a Christian, but still like a Queen.

Perhaps, had Marie Antoinette been uncontrolled in the exercise of her judgment, she would have shown a spirit in emergency better adapted to wrestle with the times than had been discovered by His Majesty. Certain it is she was generally esteemed the most proper to be consulted of the two. From the imperfect idea which many of the persons in office entertained of the King's capacity, few of them ever made any communication of importance but to the Queen. Her Majesty never kept a single circumstance from her husband's knowledge, and scarcely decided on the smallest trifle without his consent; but so thorough was his confidence in the correctness of her judgment that he seldom, if ever, opposed her decisions. The Princesse de Lamballe used to say, "Though Marie Antoinette is not a woman of great or uncommon talents, yet her long practical knowledge gave her an insight into matters of moment which she turned to advantage with so much coolness and address amid difficulties, that I am convinced she only wanted free scope to have shone in the history of Princes as a great Queen. Her natural tendencies were perfectly domestic. Had she been kept in countenance by the manners of the times, or favoured earlier by circumstances, she would have sought her only pleasures in the family circle, and, far from Court intrigue, have become the model of her sex and age."

It is by no means to be wondered at that, in her peculiar situation, surrounded by a thoughtless and dissipated Court, long denied the natural ties so necessary to such a heart, in the heyday of youth and beauty, and possessing an animated and lively spirit, she should have given way in the earlier part of her career to gaiety, and been pleased with a round of amusement. The sincere friendship which she afterwards formed for the Duchesse de Polignac encouraged this predilection. The plot to destroy her had already been formed, and her enemies were too sharp-sighted and adroit not to profit and take advantage of the opportunities afforded by this weakness. The miscreant had murdered her character long, long before they assailed her person.

The charge against her of extravagance has been already refuted. Her private palace was furnished from the State lumber rooms, and what was purchased, paid for out of her savings. As for her favourites, she never had but two, and these were no supernumerary expense or encumbrance to the State.

Perhaps it would have been better had she been more thoroughly directed by the Princesse de Lamballe. She was perfectly conscious of her good qualities, but De Polignac dazzled and humoured her love of amusement and display of splendour. Though this favourite was the image of her royal mistress in her amiable characteristics, the resemblance unfortunately extended to her weaknesses. This was not the case with the Princesse de Lamballe; she possessed steadiness, and was governed by the cool foresight of her father-in-law, the Duc de Penthievre, which both the other friends wanted.

The unshaken attachment of the Princesse de Lamballe to the Queen, notwithstanding the slight at which she at one time had reason to feel piqued, is one of the strongest evidences against the slanderers of Her Majesty. The moral conduct of the Princess has never been called in question. Amid the millions of infamous falsehoods invented to vilify and degrade every other individual connected with the Court, no imputation, from the moment of her arrival in France, up to the fatal one of her massacre, ever tarnished her character. To her

opinion, then, the most prejudiced might look with confidence. Certainly no one had a greater opportunity of knowing the real character of Marie Antoinette. She was an eye-witness to her conduct during the most brilliant and luxurious portion of her reign; she saw her from the meridian of her magnificence down to her dejection to the depths of unparalleled misery. If the unfortunate Queen had ever been guilty of the slightest of those glaring vices of which she was so generally accused, the Princess must have been aware of them; and it was not in her nature to have remained the friend and advocate, even unto death, of one capable of depravity. Yet not a breath of discord ever arose between them on that score. Virtue and vice can never harmonize; and even had policy kept Her Highness from avowing a change of sentiments, it never could have continued her enthusiasm, which was augmented, and not diminished, by the fall of her royal friend. An attachment which holds through every vicissitude must be deeply rooted from conviction of the integrity of its object.

The friendship that subsisted between this illustrious pair is an everlasting monument that honours their sex. The Queen used to say of her, that she was the only woman she had ever known without gall. “Like the blessed land of Ireland,” observed Her Majesty, “exempt from the reptiles elsewhere so dangerous to mankind, so was she freed by Providence from the venom by which the finest form in others is empoisoned. No envy, no ambition, no desire, but to contribute to the welfare and happiness of her fellow creatures—and yet, with all these estimable virtues, these angelic qualities, she is doomed, from her virtuous attachment to our persons, to sink under the weight of that affliction, which, sooner or later, must bury us all in one common ruin—a ruin which is threatening hourly.”

These presentiments of the awful result of impending storms were mutual. From frequent conversations with the Princesse de Lamballe, from the evidence of her letters and her private papers, and from many remarks which have been repeated to me personally by Her Highness, and from persons in her confidence, there is abundant evidence of the forebodings she constantly had of her own and the Queen’s untimely end.[47]

There was no friend of the Queen to whom the King showed any deference, or rather anything like the deference he paid to the Princesse de Lamballe. When the Duchesse de Polignac, the Comtesse Diane de Polignac, the Comte d’Artois, the Duchesse de Guiche, her husband, the present Duc de Grammont, the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, etc., fled from Paris, he and the Queen, as if they had foreseen the awful catastrophe which was to destroy her so horribly, entreated her to leave the Court, and take refuge in Italy. So also did her father-in-law, the Duc de Penthievre; but all in vain. She saw her friend deprived of De Polignac, and all those near and dear to her heart, and became deaf to every solicitation. Could such constancy, which looked death in its worst form in the face unshrinking, have existed without great and estimable qualities in its possessor?

The brother-in-law of the Princesse de Lamballe, the Duc d’Orleans, was her declared enemy merely from her attachment to the Queen. These three great victims have been persecuted to the tomb, which had no sooner closed over the last than the hand of Heaven fell upon their destroyer. That Louis XVI. was not the friend of this member of his family can excite no surprise, but must rather challenge admiration. He had been seduced by his artful and designing regicide companions to expend millions to undermine the throne, and shake it to

[47] *A very remarkable circumstance was related to me when I was at Vienna, after this horrid murder. The Princess of Lobkowitz, sister to the Princesse de Lamballe, received a box, with an anonymous letter, telling her to conceal the box carefully till further notice. After the riots had subsided a little in France, she was apprised that the box contained all, or the greater part, of the jewels belonging to the Princess, and had been taken from the Tuileries on the 10th of August.*
It is supposed that the jewels had been packed by the Princess in anticipation of her doom, and forwarded to her sister through her agency or desire.

pieces under the feet of his relative, his Sovereign, the friend of his earliest youth, who was aware of the treason, and who held the thunderbolt, but would not crush him. But they have been foiled in their hope of building a throne for him upon the ruin they had made, and placed an age where they flattered him he would find a diadem.

The Prince de Conti told me at Barcelona that the Duchesse d'Orleans had assured him that, even had the Duc d'Orleans survived, he never could have attained, his object. The immense sums he had lavished upon the horde of his revolutionary satellites had, previous to his death, thrown him into embarrassment. The avarice of his party increased as his resources diminished. The evil, as evil generally does, would have wrought its own punishment in either way. He must have lived suspected and miserable, had he not died. But his reckless character did not desert him at the scaffold. It is said that before he arrived at the Place de Greve he ate a very rich ragout, and drank a bottle of champagne, and left the world as he had gone through it.

The supernumerary, the uncalled-for martyr, the last of the four devoted royal sufferers, was beheaded the following spring. For this murder there could not have been the shadow of a pretext. The virtues of this victim were sufficient to redeem the name of Elizabeth from the stain with which the two of England and Russia, who had already borne it, had clouded its immortality.[48]

She had never, in any way, interfered in political events. Malice itself had never whispered a circumstance to her dispraise. After this wanton assassination, it is scarcely to be expected that the innocent and candid looks and streaming azure eyes of that angelic infant, the Dauphin, though raised in humble supplication to his brutal assassins, with an eloquence which would have disarmed the savage tiger, could have won wretches so much more pitiless than the most ferocious beasts of the wilderness, or saved him from their slow but sure poison, whose breath was worse than the upas tree to all who came within its influence.

The Duchesse d'Angouleme, the only survivor of these wretched captives, is a living proof of the baleful influence of that contaminated prison, the infectious tomb of the royal martyrs. That once lovely countenance, which, with the goodness and amiableness of her royal father, whose mildness hung on her lips like the milk and honey of human kindness, blended the dignity, grace, elegance, and innocent vivacity, which were the acknowledged characteristics of her beautiful mother, lost for some time all traces of its original attractions. The lines of deep-seated sorrow are not easily obliterated. If the sanguinary republic had not wished to obtain by exchange the Generals La Fayette, Bournonville, Lameth, etc., whom Dumourier had treacherously consigned into the hands of Austria, there is little: doubt but that, from the prison in which she was so long doomed to vegetate only to make life a burthen, she would have been sent to share the fate of her murdered family.

How can the Parisians complain that they found her Royal Highness, on her return to France, by no means what they required in a Princess? Can it be wondered at that her marked grief should be visible when amidst the murderers of her family? It should rather be a wonder that she can at all bear the scenes in which she moves, and not abhor the very name of Paris, when every step must remind her of some out rage to herself, or those most dear to her, or of some beloved relative or friend destroyed! Her return can only be accounted for by the spell of that all-powerful 'amor patriae', which sometimes prevails over every other influence.

[48] *The eighteen years' imprisonment and final murder of Mary, Queen of Scots, by Elizabeth of England, is enough to stigmatize her forever, independently of the many other acts of tyranny which stain her memory. The dethronement by Elizabeth of Russia of the innocent Prince Ivan, her near relation, while yet in the cradle, gives the Northern Empress a claim to a similar character to the British Queen.*

Before I dismiss this subject, it may not be uninteresting to my readers to receive some desultory anecdotes that I have heard concerning one or two of the leading monsters, by whom the horrors upon which I have expatiated were occasioned.

David, the famous painter, was a member of the sanguinary tribunal which condemned the King. On this account he has been banished from France since the restoration.

If any one deserved this severity, it was David. It was at the expense of the Court of Louis XVI. that this ungrateful being was sent to Rome, to perfect himself in his sublime art. His studies finished, he was pensioned from the same patrons, and upheld as an artist by the special protection of every member of the Royal Family.

And yet this man, if he may be dignified by the name, had the baseness to say in the hearing of the unfortunate Louis XVI., when on trial, “Well! when are we to have his head dressed, a la guillotine.”

At another time, being deputed to visit the Temple, as one of the committee of public safety, as he held out his snuff-box before the Princesse Elizabeth, she, conceiving he meant to offer it, took a pinch. The monster, observing what she had done, darting a look of contempt at her, instantly threw away the snuff, and dashed the box to pieces on the floor.

Robespierre had a confidential physician, who attended him almost to the period when he ascended the scaffold, and who was very often obliged, ‘malgre-lui’, to dine tete-a-tete with this monopolizer of human flesh and blood. One day he happened to be with him, after a very extraordinary number had been executed, and amongst the rest, some of the physician’s most intimate acquaintances.

The unwilling guest was naturally very downcast, and ill at ease, and could not dissemble his anguish. He tried to stammer out excuses and get away from the table.

Robespierre, perceiving his distress, interrogated him as to the cause.

The physician, putting his hand to his head, discovered his reluctance to explain.

Robespierre took him by the hand, assured him he had nothing to fear, and added, “Come, doctor, you, as a professional man, must be well informed as to the sentiments of the major part of the Parisians respecting me. I entreat you, my dear friend, frankly to avow their opinion. It may perhaps serve me for the future, as a guide for governing them.”

The physician answered, “I can no longer resist the impulse of nature. I know I shall thereby oppose myself to your power, but I must tell you, you are generally abhorred,—considered the Attila, the Sylla, of the age,—the two-footed plague, that, walks about to fill peaceful abodes with miseries and family mournings. The myriads you are daily sending to the slaughter at the Place de Greve, who have, committed no crime, the carts of a certain description, you have ordered daily to bear a stated number to be sacrificed, directing they should be taken from the prisons, and, if enough are not in the prisons, seized, indiscriminately in the streets, that no place in the deadly vehicle may be left unoccupied, and all this without a trial, without even an accusation, and without any sanction but your own mandate—these things call the public curse upon you, which is not the less bitter for not being audible.”

“Ah!” said Robespierre, laughing. “This puts me in mind of a story told of the cruelty and tyranny, of Pope Sixtus the Fifth, who, having one night, after he had enjoyed himself at a Bacchanalian supper, when heated with wine, by way of a ‘bonne bouche’, ordered the first man that should come through the gate of the ‘Strada del popolo’ at Rome to be immediately hanged. Every person at this drunken conclave—nay, all Rome—considered the Pope a

tyrant, the most cruel of tyrants, till it was made known and proved, after his death, that the wretch so executed had murdered his father and mother ten years previously. I know whom I send to the Place de Greve. All who go there are guilty, though they may not seem so. Go on, what else have you heard?"

"Why, that you have so terrified all descriptions of persons, that they fear even your very breath, and look upon you as worse than the plague; and I should not be surprised, if you persist in this course of conduct, if something serious to yourself should be the consequence, and that ere long."

Not the least extraordinary part of the story is that this dialogue between the devil and the doctor took place but a very, few hours previous to Robespierre's being denounced by Tallien and Carriere to the national convention, as a conspirator against the republican cause. In defending himself from being arrested by the guard, he attempted to shoot himself, but the ball missed, broke the monster's jaw-bone only, and nearly impeded his speaking.

Singularly enough, it was this physician who was sent for to assist and dress his wounds. Robespierre replied to the doctor's observations, laughing, and in the following language:

"Oh, poor devils! they do not know their own interest. But my plan of exterminating the evil will soon teach them. This is the only thing for the good of the nation; for, before you can reform a thousand Frenchmen, you must first lop off half a million of these vagabonds, and, if God spare my life, in a few months there will be so many the less to breed internal commotions, and disturb the general peace of Europe.[49]

The same physician observed that from the immense number of executions during the sanguinary reign of that monster, the Place de Greve became so complete a swamp of human blood that it would scarcely hold the scaffolding of the instrument of death, which, in consequence, was obliged to be continually moved from one side of the square to the other. Many of the soldiers and officers, who were obliged to attend these horrible executions, had constantly their half-boots and stockings filled with the blood of the poor sufferers; and as, whenever there was any national festival to be given, it generally followed one of the most sanguinary of these massacres, the public places, the theatres especially, all bore the tracks of blood throughout the saloons and lobbies.

[49] *When Bonaparte was contriving the Consulship for life, and, in the Irish way, forced the Italian Republic to volunteer an offer of the Consulship of Italy, by a deputation to him at Paris, I happened to be there. Many Italians, besides the deputies, went on the occasion, and, among them, we had the good fortune to meet the Abbe Fortis, the celebrated naturalist, a gentleman of first-rate abilities, who had travelled three-fourths of the globe in mineralogical research. The Abbe chanced one day to be in company with my husband, who was an old acquaintance of his, where many of the chopfallen deputies, like themselves, true lovers of their country, could not help declaring their indignation at its degraded state, and reprobating Bonaparte for rendering it so ridiculous in the face of Europe and the world. The Abbe Fords, with the voice of a Stentor, and spreading his gigantic form, which exceeded six feet in height, exclaimed: "This would not have been the case had that just and wise man Robespierre lived but a little longer."*
Every one present was struck with horror at the observation. Noticing the effect of his words, the Abbe resumed: "I knew well I should frighten you in showing any partiality for that bloody monopoliser of human heads. But you do not know the perfidy of the French nation so well as I do. I have lived among them many years. France is the sink of human deception. A Frenchman will deceive his father, wife, and child; for deception is his element. Robespierre knew this, and acted upon it, as you shall hear."
The Abbe then related to us the story I have detailed above, verbatim, as he had it from the son of Esculapius, who himself confirmed it afterwards in a conversation with the Abbe in our presence.
Having completed his anecdote, "Well," said the Abbe, "was I not right in my opinion of this great philosopher and foreseer of evils, when I observed that had he but lived a few months longer, there would have been so many less in the world to disturb its tranquillity?"

The infamous Carrier, who was the execrable agent of his still more execrable employer, Robespierre, was left afterwards to join Tallien in a conspiracy against him, merely to save himself; but did not long survive his atrocious crimes or his perfidy.

It is impossible to calculate the vast number of private assassinations committed in the dead of the night, by order of this cannibal, on persons of every rank and description.

My task is now ended. Nothing remains for me but the reflections which these sad and shocking remembrances cannot fail to awaken in all minds, and especially in mine. Is it not astonishing that, in an age so refined, so free from the enormous and flagitious crimes which were the common stains of barbarous centuries, and at an epoch peculiarly enlightened by liberal views, the French nation, by all deemed the most polished since the Christian era, should have given an example of such wanton, brutal, and coarse depravity to the world, under pretences altogether chimerical, and, after unprecedented bloodshed and horror, ended at the point where it began!

The organized system of plunder and anarchy, exercised under different forms more or less sanguinary, produced no permanent result beyond an incontestible proof that the versatility of the French nation, and its puny suppleness of character, utterly incapacitate it for that energetic enterprise without which there can be no hope of permanent emancipation from national slavery. It is my unalterable conviction that the French will never know how to enjoy an independent and free Constitution.

The tree of liberty unavoidably in all nations has been sprinkled with human blood; but, when bathed by innocent victims, like the foul weed, though it spring up, it rots in its infancy, and becomes loathsome and infectious. Such has been the case in France; and the result justifies the Italian satire:

“Un albero senza fruta
Baretta senza testa
Governo che non resta.”

THE END

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