The Making of A King

I. A. Taylor

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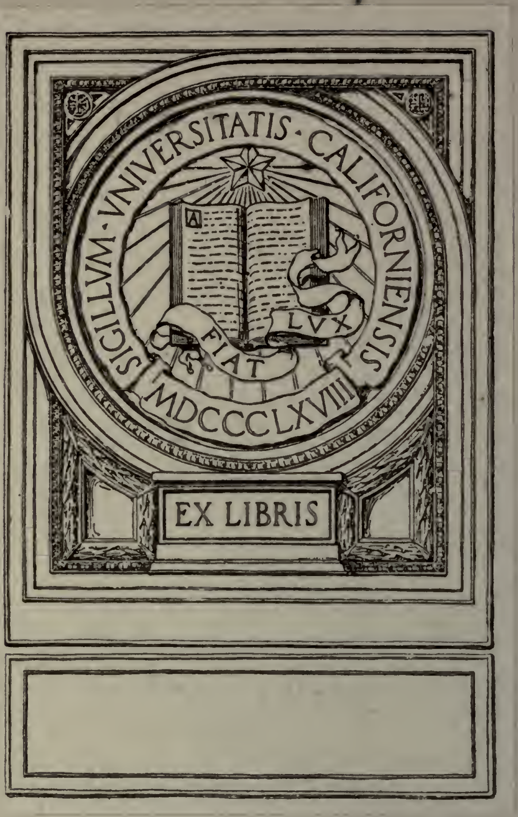

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THE MAKING OF A KING

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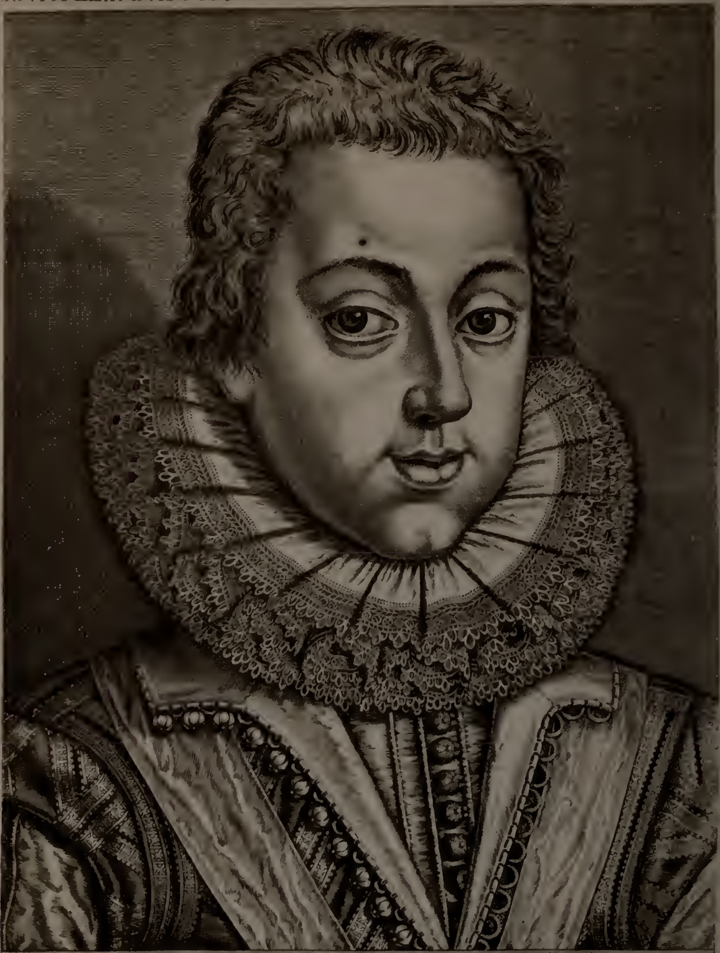
LOVIS XIII. PAR LA GRACE DE DIEV ROY DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE



Surgeon de Sainct LOVYS, & fils du Grand HENRY,
Qui doibs tes actions à ces deux grands exemples
Voy les Palmes de l'vn, & de l'autre les Temples,
Et ſois par leurs vertus de ton Peuple chery.

From an engraving by J. le Clerc

Louis the Thirteenth.

THE MAKING OF A KING

By

I. A. TAYLOR

Author of "Lord Edward Fitzgerald," "Queen Henrietta Maria," "Queen Hortense and her Friends," "Lady Jane Grey and her Times," "Christina of Sweden," etc.

WITH 17 ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING
A PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE

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PREFACE

THE nets of history have a terrible tendency to let the little fishes through. It would indeed be difficult to find a mesh strong enough to hold captive the monsters of the deep, and at the same time sufficiently delicate to catch the shining goldfish, or even a moderate-sized trout. The great facts of a man's life, when his life has mattered to the world, can usually be trusted to take care of themselves ; but the touches that give life to the picture, the puny virtues and petty faults, the lovable weaknesses and follies, have a precarious existence so far as posterity is concerned.

And yet these evasive elements, these trifling incidents, are often just the things best worth knowing. Bones are well enough in their way, and doubtless necessary to the human fabric ; but which of us, save the ascetic, would choose a skeleton for contemplation ? Its ephemeral clothing, the beauty and, not less, the blemishes, of the garment which decently veils what lies below—this is what the ordinary man desires to look at.

For this reason, quite as much as for their conspicuous position, or the influence they exercised over the destinies of men, the lives of Kings and Queens are usually more interesting than those of their

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obscurer contemporaries. Other Elizabeths may have existed, as great and as small as the last of the Tudors; but who would have found it worth his while to chronicle, in merciless minuteness, their foibles, their faults, their passions, and their caprices? The searchlight is turned upon her only because she sat upon a throne. There are women whose blotted records might have vied in interest with Mary Stuart's had any one cared to make a study of them. Other nurseries, other schoolrooms, might present features as curious as the nursery and schoolroom of the children of Henri-Quatre; but it is safe to say that few, if any, have been laid, to an equal degree, open to inspection.

To those attached to the household of the boy who was first Dauphin, and afterwards Louis XIII.—to Maître Jean Héroard, his domestic physician, in particular, whose journal furnishes so much information—their charge was naturally the central figure. His companions and attendants, the princes, nobles, ministers of State, who visited him, were no more than accessories, viewed in relation to the child whose likes and dislikes, precocious sagacity, impulses of generosity or anger, and melancholy comprehension of the anomalies around him, are carefully portrayed. Even the King, the great soldier, a chief factor in the destinies of Europe, is merged in the father. Yet, so long as he lived, it is Henri himself who must necessarily, to us who look back, occupy the front of the stage from which he is never long absent. His children, he once told Sully, were the prettiest in the world, and his happiest hours were spent in playing with them. During the first nine years of Louis's life we watch his father at this pastime, and are admitted to the *vie intime* of the King.

Those nine years were, outwardly, the most tranquil of Henri's storm-tossed existence. Yet treachery was all around him. Danger was in the air ; and the Béarnois, gay, debonair, pleasure-loving, a man who loved life and would fain have seen good days, recognised, intermittently, his peril, and knew that the assassin lay in wait. Again and again he showed the consciousness that death was ready to spring upon him ; and, ever prepared to face an open enemy, the presence of a veiled doom, the memory of prophecies of evil, haunted his imagination with a vague dread. The catastrophe which justified those fears lends pathos to the story of his intercourse with the son who was soon to be called upon to fill, inadequately, his father's place.

The four years of Louis's minority, following upon the death of Henri-Quatre, contain the story of the warring passions, the jealousies, ambitions, and hatreds surging round the poor child who was the nominal head of the State, and was already condemned to experience in some sort the loneliness belonging to sovereignty. During his father's lifetime the strong hand over him, the severity combined with the love, supplied at least one wholesome element to his training. Henri gone, he was the prey of flatterers, or of those who sought to make capital out of his weakness. Traces of healthy and close companionship, of familiar intercourse on equal terms, are rare. Signs of strong affection, given or received, are rarer still.

His mother, in her heavy, undemonstrative fashion, may have loved him—the fact has been questioned. It is certain that her tenderness afterwards centred on her younger son. On the other hand, any sign on Louis's part of a preference was a danger-signal, menacing the power of those who hoped to rule through him, and a reason to compass, if possible, the removal of the object of his liking. In some dim way the boy recognised the fact.

"They want to take him away because I love him," he cried with tears, when Alexandre de Vendôme was to be sent out of the country. Louis, as he once said of himself, was not "grand parleur," but the complaint, finding vent in a moment's passion of sorrow, points to a grievance felt and resented at other times in silence by the boy whose unwise clinging in after years to worthless favourites indicates a special craving for affection and companionship.

No attempt is made in this volume to read the man into the child, or to interpret his early years by the light of what followed them. To readers who may desire to pursue the story, and to trace in Louis's after-life the results and consequences of his training, the means of doing so lie ready to their hand, both in the memoirs and records of his contemporaries and in the works of later writers. These pages are concerned alone with the boy Louis, Dauphin and King—a small, helpless figure standing out against the sombre background of intrigue, violence, passion, and treachery by which he was surrounded.

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE MAKING OF A KING

CHAPTER I

1601

The Court at Fontainebleau—Awaiting the Dauphin's birth—César de Vendôme—Birth of Louis XIII.—Rejoicings—The Dauphin's horoscope.

IT was September 1601. The Court was at Fontainebleau. Paris was on its knees. The devotion of the Forty Hours was going on, and the people thronged the churches. Those little given to prayer prayed now, for a momentous issue was at stake. Was France, by the mercy of God, to be granted, at long last, an heir to the throne; or was her tranquillity, her future, to continue to be dependent on the slender thread of a single life? Would the child whose birth was awaited fulfil the hopes and longings of the nation, or were those hopes and longings destined to be disappointed? The question was on the point of receiving an answer.

At the palace all was prepared for the welcome to be given to a Dauphin. Henri-Quatre loved Fontainebleau, where the event was to take place. There he hunted; there he spent leisure hours devising additions to the mass of buildings successive centuries had contributed to erect. Portions of the palace begun by Francis I. had been finished by him; fresh features had been added. He had built the Galerie des Cerfs, where the grim tragedy of Monaldesco's murder was to be enacted some fifty years later. He had fashioned the lake south of the Cour des Fontaines and the canal running the length of the park. And to the great oval chamber where his son was now to be born he afterwards added, in commemoration of the day, the Porte Dauphine.

The Princes of the Blood—so troublesome and turbulent an element in the history of France—had been bidden to Fontainebleau, that they might be witnesses, according to custom, of the birth of the King's son. The Prince de Conti, by reason of his infirmities a negligible element in political life, was at the palace, as well as his more important cousin, the Comte de Soissons. The Duc de Montpensier, Montmorency, Constable of France, with a crowd of other nobles, were in attendance; Catherine, Duchesse de Bar, the King's only sister, was there, and the Duchesse de Nemours. And the nine-year-old César de Vendôme, son to Henri-Quatre by Gabrielle d'Estrées, whose succession to the throne of France had been hitherto considered not out of the range of possibility, was also keeping his father company. The post of Lady-in-waiting to the Queen was filled by Antoinette de Pons, Marquise de Guercheville—the same who had, before Henri's second marriage, been the object for a brief space of his wandering affections, and had refused to listen to his suit, saying with dignity that, unfit by station to become his wife, she came of too noble a race to occupy any other position. Mademoiselle de Rénoulière was first woman of the bed-chamber. Madame Louise Boursier was to act as *sage-femme.*

For the household of the Dauphin thought had already been taken. The post of *gouvernante* to the unborn infant had been conferred upon Madame de Montglat, whose reign in the royal nursery was to continue for many years. Maître Jean Héroard, Physician-in-Ordinary to the King, had been named the child's domestic doctor, the appointment being made by Henri in person at four o'clock on September 21. That afternoon, meeting Héroard in the palace garden on returning from the hunt, the King had announced to the man of medicine the honour in store for him in language leaving no doubt that, however it might be with others, the person chiefly interested in the birth of an heir, refused to contemplate the possibility of disappointment.

"I have chosen you," Henri told Maître Héroard, "to place near my son. Serve him well."

All was therefore ready. France, the King, his enemies and his friends, his loyal subjects, and the men who hated him and were leagued together that they might compass his downfall, were alike waiting and watching for what was to come.

And the foreign Queen, a stranger amongst strangers, unloved by her husband, distrusted by many of his people, was also waiting, conscious, it may be, that upon the question whether or not she would give an heir to the throne might hang her future fortunes. Her position might seem secure ; but she well knew that hostile forces were at work against her, and that the Marquise de Verneuil, insolent and ambitious, by whom the King was held enthralled, had in her possession a written promise of dangerous significance. With a Dauphin born in lawful wedlock to strengthen her hands, Marie de Medicis could trust to her power of holding her own against her rival ; but how would it be otherwise ? Might not she, like Marguerite de Valois, the wife whose place she filled, be in her turn discarded by the King ?

Thus, anxiously for all, the hours went by. César de Vendôme—César Monsieur, as his father liked him to be called—ignorant of the change to be effected in his position should a son of unchallengeable legitimacy be born to the King, was a sharer in the prevailing excitement. Waylaying Madame Boursier as she was passing through the palace, he put to her the question in all men's minds. Would the infant, he asked, be a boy or a girl ?

That, answered the *sage-femme*, playing with the child's eagerness, would be as she pleased.

"*Sage-femme*," pleaded the Duke, "*sage-femme*, since it depends upon you, make it a boy."

"What will you give me if I do ?" she asked.

"All you want," he promised ; "or rather"—honestly limiting her expectations—"all I have."

Little Vendôme, with the whole of France, was to be granted his desire. At half-past ten on the evening of September 27—Maître Héroard vouches for the hour, on the strength of his watch, made by M. Plantard, of Abbeville—the Dauphin was born.

Not at once did Madame Boursier put an end to the general anxiety. Apprehensive that joy might prove as dangerous to the mother as grief, the *sage-femme* kept the momentous fact at first to herself, the King himself remaining ignorant that his hopes had been crowned. Watching the nurse's face he imagined indeed that upon it he read disaster, and that Heaven had pronounced against him. Describing the scene a few days later, after his light-hearted fashion, he told his sister and the Princes of the Blood that never had he seen, on the field of battle or elsewhere, so much determination shown by man or woman.

"She had my son upon her knee," he said, "and looked around her as coldly as if she held a thing of nought. And it was a Dauphin, not seen in France for eighty years!"

It was a Dauphin. As she watched the King, withdrawn to a distance, his countenance sad and changed, Madame Boursier relented and sent him a message intimating that all was well. Even with this assurance Henri could scarcely believe in a joy so great. Only when the tidings were corroborated by the *sage-femme* in person did the colour return to his face.

"*Sage-femme*," he asked, as he again drew near, "is it a son? I beseech you not to give me false hopes. It would kill me." Then, as a "petit M. le Dauphin" was displayed to him, he lifted his eyes to Heaven, and, with the great tears running down, gave thanks.

"*Ma mie*," he said to the Queen, "God has done us the great grace of giving us what we asked. We have a fair son."

Anxiety, fear, anticipation were replaced by certainty. France was no longer without an heir. In the eyes of those who wished the King well all was as it should be. Others perhaps, looking on, felt that the deathblow had been dealt to their secret hopes, and that thenceforth plots, plans, conspiracies must be arranged upon a fresh basis.

The infant had, by Henri's orders, been handed over to Madame de Montglat, as the woman to be chiefly entrusted with his care. After the fashion of the day, he was given a few drops of wine, the little body being also washed with red wine and oil, and the head with wine and oil of roses. It was probably when all this had been done that his father solemnly blessed him, placing the sword in the tiny hand, with the prayer that it might be used for God's glory alone and in the defence of the French people.

After which the King left the bedchamber, to announce the child's birth to the concourse of nobles awaiting him in the adjoining apartment. A very rapture of emotion greeted the tidings he had to impart. Men, beside themselves with joy and relief, crowded around him and flung themselves, almost knocking him down, at his feet, as he bade them give thanks to God.

"Prepare, each one of you," he said, "to do it," proceeding to admit so great a throng into the very presence of the Queen and her newborn baby that it was scarcely possible to move. Madame Boursier, concerned on account of the fainting mother, would have protested ; but, putting his hand on her shoulder, Henri imposed silence upon her.

"Hush, hush," he said. "This child belongs to all the world. Let every one rejoice."

And thus began the life of Louis XIII.

Throughout the length and breadth of his father's kingdom he was greeted as a supreme gift from Heaven, a saviour from ruin and disorder and the distraction of a disputed succession. Visiting the child some months later, an aged general of the King's gave voice to the prevailing enthusiasm.

"May it please God, to grant to Monseigneur the Dauphin his father's good fortune, the valour of Charlemagne, and the piety of St. Louis," the old man prayed as he fell, weeping, on his knees. "Let God call me hence when it shall please Him. I have seen the salvation of the world."

Success to some means of necessity defeat to others. A scene significant of much—of changing fortunes and perished hopes—is described by Madame Boursier. On the day following upon the Dauphin's birth she encountered the Duc de Vendôme loitering about after the manner of a neglected child. Holding by the tapestry covering the entrance to the chamber through which guests were passing in succession to inspect the newborn heir, he had stopped short as if bewildered when the nurse accosted him.

"*Hé quoi*, Monsieur," she said kindly. "What are you doing there ?"

"I do not know," the boy answered vaguely. "No one speaks to me. No one says anything to me any more."

The good woman did her best to explain away the defection of the courtiers. It was, she said, because every one was going to see M. le Dauphin, who had only just arrived. When all had greeted him, they would talk to the little Duke as before. The incident being reported to the Queen, Marie was very pitiful, in the midst of her happiness, over the son of the dead Gabrielle. It was enough to kill the poor child, she said; giving orders that he should receive even more attention than usual.

"Every one," she observed, "is amusing themselves with my son, and nobody thinks of him. It must seem strange to the child."

If Marie de Medicis has many sins and failings to be laid to her charge, her tenderness for the son of the woman Henri had loved should be allowed to weigh in the balance on the other side. Nor, in spite of the jealousy and indignation evoked in her by the King's conduct, is this a solitary instance of her kindness towards the children who shared their father's love with her own.

Meantime the King was a happy man; and will not have grudged the thousand crowns won from him by Zamet, the banker, who had wagered that the infant would be a boy. Two thousand crowns had been likewise won by the fortunate gambler from the Queen, the child having been born, as he had prophesied, on a Thursday; so that he too had reason to be well content. Te Deums were sung, and the Pope was to be invited to be godfather, the King desiring to present his son to God, "and to incorporate him into the Church as worthily as possible, so that he may tread in the footsteps of his ancestors."

All went well ; and the Queen, joy and excitement notwithstanding, was in so satisfactory condition that, no more than two days after the birth, Henri was writing to tell Rosny that it was impossible to believe how rapidly she was recovering—that she had already done her own hair and talked of leaving her bed.

"Elle a un naturel terriblement robuste et fort," added the King. . . . "I believe, as you do, in the favour done me by God in giving me a son, and in the part that you and all the good folk in my Kingdom take in my joy. Yesterday, coming home from hunting a deer which had escaped me, I heard the firing of the cannon in Paris."

It would have been better had the King been content with the present and had not striven to unveil the future. An unwise curiosity clouded, if only for the moment, his full satisfaction. Another physician besides Héroard had been present at the birth—one M. de la Rivière, suspected of Huguenot proclivities. This gentleman, versed in the art of astrology, had been directed by the King to take careful note of the exact hour and minute when the child first drew breath and to cast his horoscope. The physician obeyed. Yet a fortnight elapsed, and the King had heard nothing, till, summoning him to his presence, he called him to account for his silence.

"You have told me nothing as to the birth of my son, the Dauphin," he said. "What did you find ?"

Rivière replied with an affectation of carelessness.

He admitted that he had begun something of the kind, but had let it alone. He had ceased to amuse himself with a science he had partly forgotten, and which was frequently greatly at fault.

The King brushed his excuses curtly aside. Rivière, he said, was not a man to indulge in scruples. He was unwilling to speak, lest he should either be compelled to lie or should give offence. On pain of his displeasure he commanded the doctor to be open with him.

Even when the King's orders had been issued, it was not until after repeated refusals—and then as if in anger—that Rivière obeyed and made known to him what the stars had revealed.

"Your son," he said, "will live to man's estate and will reign longer than yourself; but he will differ from you in all his tastes and humours. He will have his own opinions and fantasies—sometimes those of other people. It will be a time to think rather than to speak. . . . What has been set in order by you will be undone. He will perform great things, be fortunate in his designs, and be talked of in Christendom. He will leave issue behind him, and things will become afterwards worse. And this is all that you will know from me."

"Upon which," says the narrator of the scene, "the King, having fallen into a melancholy dream, said: 'I see very well that you are in accord with the Huguenots. You say this because you hold with them.'

"'Sire,' replied M. de la Rivière, 'I am in accord with anything you please. But you will know nothing more from me.'" And turning away, still as if in anger, he went out.

When Rivière had withdrawn the King took Rosny, who had been present, into a window apart and spoke with him on the subject of the seer's prediction. But what he said was known to none.

CHAPTER II

1601

The King's marriage—Difficulties in choosing a wife—Gabrielle d'Estrées—Henriette d'Entragues—The Florentine match—Marie de Medicis arrives in France—Character of Henri-Quatre—Domestic discord.

IN order to understand the anomalous condition of the royal household, and the atmosphere into which Louis was born, it is necessary to go back to the time, some three years earlier, when Henri-Quatre, triumphant over his enemies, and at length at leisure to take thought for the future, had determined upon obtaining the annulment of his marriage with Marguerite de Valois, the wife from whom he had been virtually separated for fourteen years.

All were agreed as to the urgent need for the step, if France were to be safe-guarded from the struggle likely to follow should Henri chance to die leaving no legitimate heir. His enemies themselves were clear upon this point ; but, in their case, a fresh marriage was not sufficient ; the wife he chose must be such as to satisfy them. Either he must marry a Queen to their liking, and who would serve to strengthen the interest of Spain, or—he should die : "Le tuer ou le marier"—so Michelet describes the alternatives they set before them.

It was not expected that much difficulty would attend the dissolution of the one marriage which was a necessary preliminary to entering upon another. There was little doubt that Rome would consent. Marguerite could be trusted not to oppose the measure. No one would lose by it ; many would gain. King and people were at one in desiring that Henri should be set free to form new ties. The question as to who should fill the place to be left vacant was less easily settled. The rival parties in the State had each their views on the subject, and the person chiefly concerned had his own. When Henri first discussed the matter with Rosny he enumerated every marriageable princess in Europe, and, whilst praising some and pointing out the disabilities of others, he found objections to all. He desired to wed—so the Minister sardonically defined the situation when the list was complete—but could discover no woman upon earth fit to become his wife. Rosny was tacitly declining to admit as a possibility the match he was well aware was in his master's mind, and was doggedly ignoring the fact that Gabrielle d'Estrées, Duchesse de Beaufort, fulfilled in Henri's eyes all the conditions necessary to satisfy him. When the King broached the subject in plain words, he made answer no less plainly, and the reply was not such as to encourage Henri to place the crown upon the head of the woman he loved, or to make her son his heir.

Yet Henri was master, and, in spite of Rosny, in spite of the mass of public opinion by which the Minister was backed, Gabrielle's chances were not small. She was genuinely and devotedly attached to the King, whilst Henri repaid her by a love greater than he had perhaps ever bestowed, or was to bestow, upon a woman. She was already the mother of one son, and was soon to give birth to another. Powerful friends were ready to support her claims. The Princess of Orange, Coligny's daughter, was her advocate; those who wished for a French Queen, and feared and dreaded a Spanish one, would have rejoiced at the match. Marguerite de Valois, indeed, indignant at the prospect of her place being filled by a woman of Gabrielle's birth and antecedents, might declare that, rather than permit the disgrace, she would oppose the decree pronouncing her own marriage void; Rosny might contemptuously refuse to allow the designation "enfants de France" to be applied to the Vendôme children in the account of the expenses incurred at their baptism, saying that no such children existed; but Henri adored the mother, was proud of his boy, and it was more than possible that the one would become Queen and the other be acknowledged heir to the throne.

So the case stood when, in Holy Week, 1600, Gabrielle solved the question by dying. Whether there had been foul play or not is of no consequence here. It was undeniable that, whilst some mourned her, more rejoiced. In the eyes of many of the King's well-wishers a peril was averted. His enemies felt that an influence adverse to their aims and objects had been removed. Henri himself lamented; but those acquainted with him foresaw that his grief would be short-lived. If brief, it was bitter.

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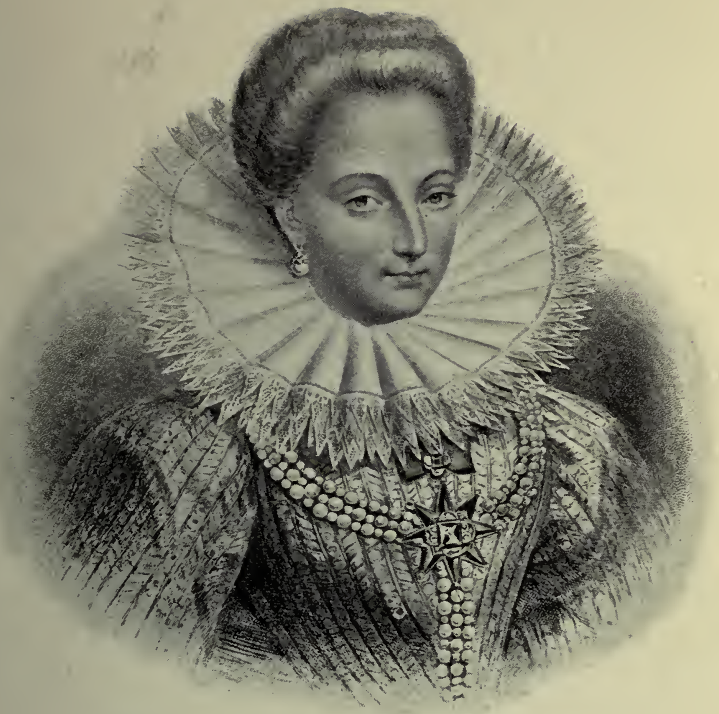

GABRIELLE D'ESTRÉES, DUCHESSE DE BEAUFORT.

p. 14]

"The root of love is dead in me," he wrote to his sister. "It will throw out no more shoots."

He probably believed what he said. Yet almost at once followed his passion for Henriette d'Entragues, the cold, ambitious, unloving woman who held him enslaved till close upon the end, and to whom the unhappiness of his nine years of married life was chiefly due.

Gabrielle gone, the question of the King's marriage was simplified, and it soon became clear that his choice of a wife would fall upon Marie de Medicis, niece of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Henriette d'Entragues, indeed, aspired to the position her predecessor had hoped to fill. Henri, wax in the hands of an intriguing woman, had gone so far as to sign a paper pledging himself to marry her should she bear him a son within a year; and though Rosny, when his master placed the document in his hands, had been bold enough to tear it across, nothing was easier than to replace it. Nevertheless, whatever might have been the case had Gabrielle lived, whatever promises had been wrung from him by Henriette, Henri could scarcely, in his saner moments, have deemed it possible to make the object of his fresh passion Queen.

As a matter of policy and convenience the Florentine match had much to recommend it. Marie de Medicis, it was true, had been one of the ladies he had mentioned to Rosny in terms of depreciation. The Duke of Florence, he said, had a niece reported to be good-looking. She came, however, of one of the least of the princely houses of Christendom, and was besides of the same race as Catherine, the late Queen-mother, who had worked so much ill to France and to himself. Yet, in spite of her disadvantages, Marie was fast distancing her rivals. Henri was under obligations—especially money obligations—to her uncle. He hoped, should he wed the niece, to be relieved from a part of his debts, and to obtain in addition more of the ready money he urgently needed. Another war was inevitable if the rights of France were to be vindicated, and a war, even if a minor one, meant fresh needs and necessities. The Duke of Savoy retained possession of territory acquired during the time when France was distracted by the League and its civil wars. His promises of restitution or compensation were only made to be broken or evaded; it was becoming plain that force must be used. Rosny, wise, prudent, and fearless, was prepared for the struggle; Henri was never unwilling to unsheath the sword. In August 1600 the standard was raised at Lyons, and success again attended upon the arms of the great captain. Treachery, it was true, was one of the forces to be contended with, but if the Duc de Biron, Marshal of the troops, was at heart a traitor, Rosny and his master were at hand to counteract the effects of his double dealing. The incompetent nobles in command of the artillery were replaced by capable officers; every resource of the country was brought into requisition to ensure success, and once more the King was a victor.

In the meantime the last obstacle in the way of his remarriage had been removed. A decree from Rome had been obtained annulling his union with Marguerite; Marie de Medicis was to be Queen of France.

Most people approved of the match. To one person it meant failure and disappointment, the downfall of inordinate aspirations and ambitions. Henriette d'Entragues, now Marquise de Verneuil, never forgot that she had hoped to wear a crown and to be mother of a Dauphin ; nor was she a woman to pardon her supplanter. Anxious to propitiate her so far as it was possible, the King delayed the marriage as long as he could find excuses for delay ; but the respite could only be short. Marie, as well as her uncle, was impatient. Perhaps, at twenty-six, she was in truth half in love with the great soldier she had never seen, and whom, having seen, she was to love so little and to have so little reason to love. In a letter she wrote when her fate was decided there is a note of something more than the conventional language of compliment.

" Since all my will and all my soul live but in you," so it ran, " may your Majesty be assured of being ever, I will not say loved by me, for that is very little ; but, if I may be permitted to say so, adored."

A time came when reasons for delay could be no longer averred. Marie de Medicis and Henri-Quatre were wedded, by proxy, with all the magnificence and pomp due to the position of the bridegroom. The bride was escorted to her new country, and her first meeting with Henri took place at Lyons.

On this occasion all went well. Nevertheless, to those who look back at the company gathered together, germs of disintegration are perceptible already at work. The King had brought a strange companion in the little Duc de Vendôme, then a tall boy of seven, bright and spirited. His hand was kissed by the Tuscan ambassador, as though he had in truth borne the title of enfant de France repudiated by Rosny, and upon him Marie lavished caresses. With the new Queen was her foster-sister, Leonora Galigai, soon to become the wife of the notorious Concini, whose influence was to be so important and disastrous an element in the future, and for whom—also at Lyons—the King at once conceived a marked dislike.

Upon the arrival of the Queen at Paris some six weeks later, she was enlightened as to the mode of existence she was to expect. The very evening that she reached the capital the Duchesse de Nemours and Mademoiselle de Guise, yielding reluctant obedience to the King's command, presented to his bride the Marquise de Verneuil, who, in Henri's own blunt words, having been his mistress, now desired to become the Queen's humble servant.

Without a change of countenance Marie de Medicis endured the insult: she did not forget it. And thus her married life was inaugurated.

From the first, given the characters of husband and wife, it was doomed to failure. Henri was a great King, a great soldier; he was not a great man. Nothing, says Michelet, summing up the case, was solid in him save the soldierly element; all else was fluid, changeable as water. Lovable, kindly, affectionate, gay, quick-witted, hot-tempered, impulsive, he retained to the end something of the child—a child's longing for love and approval and sympathy; something, notwithstanding his abjuration of his early creed, of a child's faith. Royalty in him had never stiffened or overshadowed humanity; but the moral sense was absent. Like Esau, he would have bartered his inheritance, spiritual or temporal, for the mess of pottage the moment offered. Yet there was a charm in him hard to resist. Emotional and easily moved, even to the point of tears, his anger was as short-lived as it was sharp. It might almost be said that he did not know how not to forgive, that he was incapable of distrust. Entering Paris as a victor, he went to the house of the Duchesse de Montpensier, his foe, and asked for food. As it was set before him, she was about, according to custom, to taste it before he ate, when he stopped her. That ceremony, he said, was not necessary. The Duchess, remembering the past, demurred.

"What!" she said, "have I not done enough to render myself suspect?"

"You are not so, *ma tante*," was the King's reply, and the old enmity broke down, conquered by his confidence.

"Ah," said his hostess, "one must be your servant"; and she kept her pledge.

Again, he had sworn that d'Aubigny, the friend of Huguenot days, the opponent of later years, should die. Nevertheless, when he placed himself in the King's hands and, looking at the scar left upon Henri's mouth by the blow of an assassin, told him sternly that, having renounced God with his lips, He had wounded him on the lips, and, should he renounce Him with the heart, the heart would be pierced, Henri only answered by placing his little son, César de Vendôme, with a smile, in the arms of the monitor. A like master might be blamed; he could not fail to be loved.

Loved, that is, by friends and servants. It was a different matter when a woman was concerned—and a woman whose fate it was to see her husband helpless in the hands of a rival, blind to that rival's disloyalty, ministering to her ambition, and ready to sacrifice to her, not only his wife and her happiness, but the interests of her children. Some women indeed might have been capable of vindicating their position, and, gaining the King's affections, have won the day. Marie de Medicis was not such a woman. Perhaps she never understood her husband sufficiently to render it possible. Henri wanted not only to be happy ; he wanted to be gay. Henriette d'Entragues owed part of her extraordinary ascendancy to the fact that she could always make him laugh. Laughter was not easily come at by means of intercourse with the Queen. Ponderous, serious, injured, with an ever-present sense of her grievances, she had no chance against the cold, clever, unscrupulous Frenchwoman ; and from the first, pitted against her, she played a losing game. "Spanish in heart, Austrian in body, Flemish by birth," she could offer little attraction to the brilliant, versatile Gascon she had married ; and what poor chances might have existed of domestic peace were minimised by the fact that Leonora and Concini were in possession of her ear. Had Henri persisted in the intention he had at first evinced to insist upon Concini's return to France, much subsequent trouble might have been avoided. The Queen's foster-sister, should she remain in France, was to have been married to a Frenchman, and the danger arising from the combined influence of the two foreign favourites would have been averted. Yielding to his wife's entreaties, Henri was weak enough to permit both Italians to accompany her to Paris, consenting afterwards, though reluctantly, to bestow upon Leonora the post and title of *dame d'atour*. The interests of the pair having become one by their subsequent marriage, the presence of husband and wife, rapacious and scheming intriguers, could not fail to prove disastrous at Court.

Leonora, low-born, ill-favoured, and totally deficient in the qualities and gifts which would have fitted her to take the place accorded her, was, strangely enough, the one of the couple whose influence over Marie was paramount. The fact of her mistress's love for her was, it can scarcely be doubted, what had determined Concini upon making her his wife. The Queen's confidence in "cette femme de néant," to use the language of the angry Grand-duke, her uncle, was blind, her affection unchanging and tenacious. To the foreign Queen Leonora, associated with her childhood and youth, represented home and country.

Concini's antecedents were of a different nature. Of a good Florentine family, his career at the University of Pisa had been marked by no successes, and, extravagant and ill-conducted, he had become an outcast from the society of his native city at the time when the King's marriage was projected. Availing himself of the opportunity, an uncle who occupied at that moment the position of Secretary of State succeeded, in spite of opposition from the Grand-duke and others, in including his nephew in the train which was to accompany Marie to France; and the foundation of his future fortune was thus laid. Such were the couple who ruled the Queen.

Had the element of discord supplied by the Concini been absent, any hopes of wedded happiness must, for Henri and Marie, have been small. The King's conduct was from the first a matter of public scandal. There had not been so much as a break in his intercourse with the Marquise de Verneuil. The very appointment of Leonora to her post in the royal household had been due to an interposition on the Marquise's part, prompted by a desire both to display her power and to gain a hold over so important an attendant on the Queen. It soon became known that she was expecting the birth of a child almost simultaneously with the King's wife. There is a degree of misconduct that the public taste finds it difficult, even in its idols, to condone, and Henri's popularity suffered a momentary eclipse.

Thus the first year of his marriage had gone by. As autumn approached he had been called away by worthier cares and duties. Spain was attacking Ostend; and the presence of her troops so close to the French frontier rendered watchfulness and supervision necessary. Near the scene of action, at Calais and Boulogne, and within sound of the conflict, the King's finer instincts awoke, and he wrote kindly to his wife.

"You know, *ma mie*," he said, "where I am going; but, with the help of God, I shall be back for your confinement. Go to Fontainebleau. Nothing will be lacking to you. You will have my sister, who is the best of company," and others whom he enumerated.

During his absence he kept Marie constantly informed of his movements, telling her of his warlike preparations, his occupations on the sea-coast, and taking thought for her welfare at home. By September 19 he had hurried back to the palace, lest he should fail to be present at the birth of his child. Eight days later the Dauphin was born.

CHAPTER III

1602

Babyhood—The Duchesse de Bar—Biron's conspiracy: its phases and development—The Queen and the Marquise de Verneuil—The King at Saint-Germain.

FOR the present it mattered little to the latest-born descendant of St. Louis whether predictions of disaster, such as those that had clouded the spirits of the King, were hazarded concerning him; or whether, as by his father's old general, he was hailed as a new Messiah. It was true that no time was lost in pointing out his duties and responsibilities, and before he was three months old Héroard had explained to him that God had bestowed him on the world that he might be a good, just, and righteous sovereign, observing with satisfaction that the infant listened very attentively to the admonition and greeted the words with a smile. But Héroard took a favourable view of the Dauphin's capacities.

Under the care of his adoring attendants, and visited by those of his future subjects judged worthy of the honour, he grew and prospered. The Duchesse de Bar, as sister to the King, was privileged to give him, for the first time, his shirt, the rocker directing her to make the sign of the cross as she handed it to him.

"Make it for me," said the Duchess, smiling. "I do not know how."

Seriousness underlay the lightness of the words. The woman's injunction may not have been given without malice. Every one knew the position of the King's sister, and were aware that, in spite of the arguments of theologians and her brother's entreaties, Catherine had remained faithful to the precepts of their common mother, Jeanne d'Albret, and was firm in her refusal to follow Henri's example and abjure the creed of her childhood. If her religion was prejudicial to her husband's house—that of Lorraine—she offered, with tears, to return to her home at Berne. But to the King's threats that he, as well as the Duke, would abandon her did she not accede to their wishes, she replied that, were his Majesty and the whole world to forsake her, she would serve God as the poorest lady upon earth rather than dishonour Him as a Queen.

Henri's menaces had been empty, and the sequel was to show that his affections were in no wise alienated by her obstinacy. On December 17 she went her way back to Lorraine, accompanied on the first stage of her journey by the King, "leaving the Catholic theologians ill-contented and the ministers well satisfied."

By the middle of November the Dauphin had been removed to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, passing through Paris on his way, where he received visits of inspection from all the Princes and Princesses at Court.

At Saint-Germain the earlier years of his childhood were, with short intervals, to be passed. Built on a hill, on the edge of a wooded plateau, it may have been considered that the high air would be conducive to health. The freedom of the country life that could be led there was an undoubted advantage ; and when, later on, the Dauphin was transferred to the Louvre, he is found longing to revisit his old haunts.

At Saint-Germain an early guest, probably by the King's desire, presented herself. "The Marquise de Verneuil," writes Héroard, "comes to see him. He looks at her with attention and laughs graciously. She was, as she said, much pleased at the honour he did her."

The jest will have veiled no little bitterness. She must have thought, as she watched the Queen's son, of her own boy, born a few days later, and whom she was accustomed boldly to term her Dauphin. Had her hopes been fulfilled, her child would have been heir to the throne. And storms were imminent.

Fortified by the possession of a son, Marie de Medicis had resolved at this time upon abandoning the attitude of submission she had at first adopted with regard to the Marquise. Indignant at her rival's insolence, she told the King that she refused for the future to admit her to her presence. It was the opening of a struggle which, though intermittent, was carried on till the end.

Henri was beginning to reap, in discord and strife, what he had sown. Nor were domestic troubles the only ones by which he was threatened. If the Dauphin's birth and the presence in the Saint-Germain nurseries of an heir to the throne was a source of joy and comfort to him, it was sorely needed. Outwardly, peace might have succeeded to conflict, rest to struggle. The storms and tempests by which the life of the Béarnois

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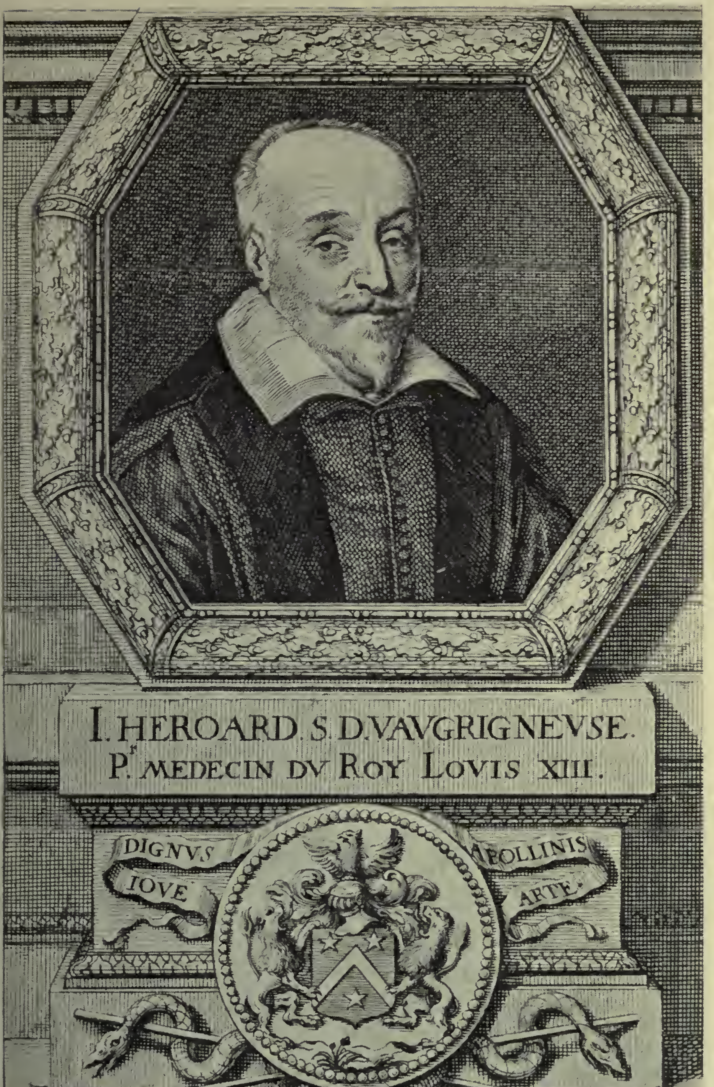
I. HEROARD. S. D. VAVGRIGNEVSE.
P.^{r} MEDECIN DV ROY LOVIS XIII.
DIGNVS
IOVE
APOLLINIS
ARTE.

From a contemporary engraving.

JEAN HÉROARD,
Physician to Louis XIII.

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had been hitherto tossed had subsided; but none knew better than the victor how precarious was this tranquillity. Though Spain, his inveterate and relentless enemy, might have owned herself defeated, he was not ignorant that she was merely biding her opportunity, and, in league with domestic foes, was gathering strength for a final attack.

Henri was always ready for a struggle with an open foe. War was his natural atmosphere, his delight. It was a different matter when the antagonist was a veiled one. To know that all around him was treachery, that in his household, amongst his intimate associates, in the men who stood nearest to the throne, he had secret enemies, on the watch to take advantage of an unguarded moment, was to lead a life of strain and tension trying to the boldest spirit. Proof might as yet be wanting, but Henri, shrewd and sagacious, appraised the situation correctly. Who were numbered amongst the traitors, how far the infection of treason had spread, he might still be uncertain. Nevertheless, as he waited the development of events he must have felt that a crisis could not be far off.

The most powerful men in the kingdom were, in fact, drawn into the nets of a conspiracy which had been for years secretly maturing. The Constable of France, Montmorency, Épernon, Bouillon—all of them possessing the greatest influence in different parts of the country—were in their several degrees involved in it. The Comte d'Auvergne, Charles IX.'s illegitimate son, half-brother to the Marquise de Verneuil, as well as the Marquise herself, were likewise implicated in the plot. Above all, one man was steeped in guilt.

That man was the Maréchal de Biron, owing more to the King than perhaps any other of his servants.

The story of his treason is a strange one—or would be strange, were it not that, the obligations of friendship and loyalty once forgotten and the downward path entered, he who has most to be forgiven becomes the man most reckless in his crime. Biron had been the King's brother-in-arms; had fought by his side on battle-field after battle-field; had twice owed to him his life; and, it must be added, had for his part sheltered Henri with his own body on more than one occasion. He had done good service, attested by thirty-two wounds; and he had had his reward, good measure, pressed down, and running over. He had been made in turn Marshal, General-in-chief, Duke, and Governor of the most important province of France, Burgundy. More than this, he had been repaid by his master's strong affection. Yet all had not availed to keep him true. Inordinately vain, proud of his exploits, and ambitious, his estimate of the services he had rendered made it impossible to satisfy him, and he lent a not unwilling ear to the King's enemies when they sought to seduce him from his allegiance.

An adventurer named La Fin, in the King's service, was the chief channel of communication between Biron and the politicians at Madrid, Brussels and Turin, who were plotting Henri's ruin—a man who, after the fashion of his kind, was in the end to deliver up to justice the dupes who had trusted him. Bribes were offered to the Marshal. He was to be given in marriage a daughter of the Duke of Savoy, richly dowered; and to be placed in a position of power and influence. On the other hand, half-measures were not to suffice. With Henri living, no successes would have been assured. The King was to die; and when, later on, his son was born, the child was included in the murderous plot. How it was to be carried out was of less importance. Biron might kill his master out hunting; the Comte d'Auvergne might contrive his death through his sister, the Marquise; a ball might settle the business on the battle-field.

To what extent Biron was a party to the darker features of the scheme is doubtful. He was said to have listened to it favourably. He may have been slandered; he certainly had opportunities of performing the deed assigned him, and did not make use of them. It seems clear that he had his moments of repentance, times when he would have drawn back from the path he was treading. "Since God has given him a son," he is quoted as saying after the birth of the Dauphin, "let us forget our dreams." But he did not forget them. It is proverbially difficult for a man to retrace his steps; and, though perhaps flinching from the thought of actual assassination, he was falling deeper and deeper into the mire.

Madame de Verneuil's share in the scheme remains likewise unproved. When the facts were in course of being disclosed, and their proper degrees of guilt brought home to the several participants in the conspiracy, Henri did what he could to shield the woman he loved from exposure. So far as she is concerned, therefore, it is difficult to form a clear judgment. That she was in some measure an accomplice does not admit of doubt. At the time the plot was first hatching she had been embittered by her indignation and disappointment at the Florentine marriage, and would have been ready to take vengeance for what she considered, not unjustifiably, the breach of the King's promise that, should she bear him a son within the year, he would make her his wife. She had been told, and gave credit to the assertion, that Henri's death would profit her and her unborn child more than his life; and, personally, her affection for him seems from first to last to have been small. The event upon which the King's promise had been conditional had not come to pass, but the sense that she had been betrayed remained. Nevertheless, the part she actually played in the conspiracy is involved in obscurity.

The bribes offered to each conspirator were shaped to meet their desires. Henri once removed, the spoil was to be divided: France was to be split up, and all concerned were to take their share. Savoy was assigned a portion of the booty, Spain another. Biron was to reap a rich reward.

Such was the condition of the plot already undermining the apparent prosperity of King and country when the short and successful campaign of 1600 had taken place. Savoy—scarcely caring, in the transitional state of affairs, to make a genuine resistance—was reduced to submission. Since Henri was to die to-morrow, why spend men and money in circumventing him to-day?

Biron's attitude at this stage was again ambiguous. Some said he had engaged to lead the King into danger; others asserted that, had this been the case, he repented and did not fulfil his promise. At Lyons, when the war was over, he made to his master one of those half-confessions sometimes serving to salve a conscience, sometimes to disguise a crime. Resenting the King's refusal to make over to him the citadel of Bourg, he had, by his own account, indulged in evil dreams. So he told Henri. The King listened to the half, and took, or seemed to take, it for the whole. With generous imprudence he forgave the penitent.

"Marshal," he said, "never call Bourg to mind again; and I also will never remember the past."

There was more than Bourg that Biron would have had to forget before he could accept, as freely as it was offered, his master's quittance. Henri may have divined it; but, bent upon recapturing the wandering affections of his old friend and comrade, he appears to have been incapable of believing that he would fail in the end to succeed. As, during the autumn weeks passed at Calais before the Dauphin's birth, reports reached him of the Duke's continued discontent; of language used concerning himself convicting the speaker of disloyalty, he still adhered, with pathetic persistency, to his purpose of winning him back by kindness and trust. Money was given him—a large sum, wrung from Rosny's unwilling fingers. To the minister's warnings Henri turned a deaf ear. Whilst admitting incriminating facts and causes of complaint, he said lightly that Biron's rhodomontades, his menaces and his boasts, should not be taken too literally—he was a man who could not refrain from speaking ill of others and bragging of himself. When he was in the saddle and sword in hand, it was a different matter. And, in spite of remonstrance, the King persisted in his attempt to regain his friend, heaping fresh favours upon him, and making him Envoy-extraordinary to England.

Perhaps, as Rosny imagined, Henri had not chosen the Marshal for this last post without a motive. The tragedy of Essex's treason and death was hardly a year old, and the King may have fancied that the fate of Elizabeth's favourite might serve as a useful object-lesson to the Duke. Whether or not the shrewd old Queen divined Henri's intentions, she did her best to second them and to drive the lesson home. It may be that reports had made their way across the Channel, not to Biron's advantage.

"He was lost through pride," she told the Ambassador, pointing to the head of the man she had loved so well, still exposed to the public view. "He thought himself indispensable. See what he gained by it. If the King, my brother, believes me, he will do what has been done in London. He will cut off the heads of traitors."

What effect the ghastly spectacle had on Biron is not recorded. It did not deter him from the course upon which he had entered. Bent upon his ruin, he went his way, to take up once more the threads of the wide-reaching conspiracy. Not long after the Dauphin's birth proofs of the Marshal's guilt that the King could not refuse to admit were in his hands. La Fin had played the part of a double traitor and had delivered up his accomplices. Leaning on the balcony at the Arsenal in close converse with the only friend, perhaps, who was unfalteringly true, Henri told Rosny what had come to his knowledge. The story had a double edge; Biron's persistent infidelity was his master's defeat. Henri's patience and long-suffering had failed to win him back.

Summoning La Fin to Fontainebleau, he gained from him all the information he had to give. Yet he was determined to do nothing in haste. La Fin was at all events a liar—he had gone so far as to seek to incriminate Rosny himself—and the King was resolved that every charge should be sifted before he struck.

Thus winter and spring went by. At Saint-Germain the Dauphin lived and throve, an additional obstacle in the way of the contemplated dismemberment of the kingdom. And still the conspiracy spread, developing new features. Not only was the child, as well as his father, marked for death; but none who, being of the blood royal, might aspire to the succession, were to be left alive.

The year, in spite of all Henri knew or suspected, had opened cheerfully. It was true that less than a month after his son's birth the King had braved his wife's displeasure by an attempt to effect a modification in the footing to which she had admitted her Italian favourites. Finding them both conversing with the Queen when she was in bed, he had told Leonora sharply to confine herself to her duty of arranging her mistress's hair, adding that, as she had no sense—*giudicio*—he would address himself to her husband. Leonora had wept all the next day, the Queen also shedding tears; whilst Henri, by no means softened, had observed aloud, when at table, that if his wife would not have Princesses about her, and be served by them, or by those who treated her as a Queen, she would not be recognised as Queen.

To Giovannini, the Tuscan Resident, Concini—a sign of his growing arrogance—had behaved in such a fashion that the envoy expressed his wish to be recalled, to renounce all earthly courts, and to become the courtier of God alone.

Marie de Medicis was not a woman to submit meekly to her husband's will, and her refusal to admit the Marquise to her presence may have been a blow struck in return for the King's attack upon her favourites. She did not, however, persevere in the determination she had announced; and by the end of January King, Queen, and Marquise were all apparently on friendly terms, and were visiting the Dauphin at Saint-Germain together. "The King and Queen came [to the nursery] at one o'clock," records Héroard, "the King and the Marquise at five. He laughed much and played with them."

Again and again Henri is found enjoying at the château a respite from the graver cares pressing upon him with increasing urgency; sometimes amusing the child as he lies in his cradle; watching him rocked; having him brought to be present at his supper; or walking with him on the terrace in the pleasant spring weather. Yet in the background of his mind, as he played with his little son, must have been the thought of the traitors who were laying their plots for his own destruction and that of his heir. Worse than all, he cannot, loath as he was to admit it, have escaped the suspicion that the Marquise was implicated in their designs. Amongst her many sins over-caution was not included, and some at least of the stories current concerning her must have reached his ears, affording him matter for reflection.

"The Florentine may have her son," she had declared. "I have my Dauphin. The King was my husband before he was hers," refusing also to accede to Henri's desire that the small pretender should be placed at Saint-Germain, to be the associate of "all the bastards there." A singular feature of the case was the degree of influence she was believed to exercise over matters which might have been considered wholly beyond her control. According to the Tuscan envoy she was reported to have a voice in the arrangements of the royal nursery, and was rumoured to have been instrumental in placing Madame de Montglat at its head. He had been told by a competent authority, added the Italian, that should the King die, and the Marquise's son fall into powerful hands, trouble might come of it. He further lamented—a curious proof of the Queen's policy at this moment—the caresses lavished by Marie on her rival, deploring the fact that no one had courage to open her eyes.

If the Queen's eyes had not been opened by all that had passed since her marriage it might have seemed difficult to perform the feat. Giovannini, however, was determined that she should not continue ignorant of the true state of affairs, and took his measures accordingly. An Italian priest, Torricello by name, had undertaken to place Marie on her guard, and, whether or not by means of his intervention, she quickly changed her attitude of conciliation. By May she had adopted the line she pursued, though intermittently, to the end, had refused to admit the Marquise to her presence, and had made complaint to the King of her insolence with regard to herself and to the Dauphin.

Irritated and angry, probably with both women alike, Henri can scarcely have blamed his wife. But at the present moment, engrossed by other and serious subjects of preoccupation, he had little time to spare for domestic cares. The conspiracy was drawing towards a head, and it was clear that steps must soon be taken to bring its promoters to justice.

CHAPTER IV

1602

Progress of Biron's conspiracy—The traitors at Saint-Germain—Biron's letter—Henri ready to pardon him—He refuses to admit his guilt—Is arrested—The King and Madame de Verneuil at Saint-Germain.

THE present condition of affairs had produced a situation involving a severe strain upon the temper and nerves of the man against whom so many powerful enemies were leagued together. He knew much, he suspected more; but his policy was to disguise both knowledge and suspicion until the time should come when an effective blow could be struck. Practically and morally assured of the guilt of men with whom he was keeping up the semblance of friendly intimacy, he was compelled to treat them, as yet unconvicted of their crime, as if no suspicion of their treason was harboured in his mind, and to permit them to visit his heir. Now it is Épernon who has brought his three sons to pay their respects to their future sovereign. All kiss the Dauphin's hands, and the Duke, "regarding him with attention, speaks in praise of him." A week or two later M. de Bouillon, steeped in treachery, is one of the guests at Saint-Germain. On the same day Hieronimo Taxis, Spanish Ambassador, representative of the Power most persistent in hatred of the King and in league with all his foes, comes bareheaded to wait upon the child, explaining, as he bows low, that he had wished not to leave the country without seeing him. With Bouillon and the men who had accompanied him to Saint-Germain, Taxis watches the boy, and the possibility of the Spanish marriage which eventually came to pass is discussed, as though the guests had no knowledge of the plot laid to cut short the little life. More singular still, towards the end of April the arch-traitor, Biron himself, has the audacity to send his brother-in-law to carry a letter from him to Madame de Montglat, filled with professions of loyal attachment.

"Madame," he wrote, "my desire to have news of Monseigneur the Dauphin causes me to send this messenger to entreat you to give me tidings of him . . . for I have a passion and affection for him, hoping for his happy growth; being of those who believe him to be given by God for the maintenance of this State. He could not fail to be generous, virtuous, and fortunate, being born of the King, my master, who possesses all these gifts more than any other King or Prince has possessed them. For my own part, I figure him to myself as the fairest, most amiable Prince that ever was or ever shall be; for all my inclination is to love him; and, besides the royalty the King will one day bequeath to him, he will leave him good and loyal subjects and servants. I should regret it if death should overtake me before I have given proof of this my ardent zeal, vowed to him as from the humble and obedient servant of the King, his father."

A strange letter, with its gratuitous lies and professions, to come from a man who could not have been wholly base. Was it a mere blind, a clumsy attempt to shield the writer from suspicion, the outcome perhaps of a moment's panic? Or was it the expression of a mood of remorse? Did the traitor still conceive it possible to retrace his steps and to recapture his past? It is impossible to say.

Another visitor, the Comte d'Auvergne, Madame de Verneuil's brother, who shared Biron's pre-eminence in treason, was manifestly ill at ease in the presence of his intended victim. "He remained a short half-hour," says Héroard, "leaning against the balustrade, his face half covered by his cloak, and speaking to Madame de Montglat in confused and ill-chosen language."

It may be that, in spite of the assumption of innocence implied by his presence at the château, he remembered uneasily that, a fortnight earlier, at Fontainebleau, the King had given signs that he was on his guard. As the two were riding together Auvergne had fallen behind, and Henri, noting it, had bidden him pass on in front, adding, in the ear of a companion, that no one was more capable of venturing on a *vigliaccheria* than the Count. Yet this man, whom Henri believed might stab him in the back, was permitted to pay his respects to the Dauphin. His visit to Saint-Germain had been made on May 21. Before more than a month had gone by he, with Biron, was lodged in the Bastille.

The decisive step was taken on June 21; nor was it without hesitation that even then it was resolved upon. A curious amount of sympathy appears to have been evoked by the great soldier who had fallen into treason, the King telling Marie that, had he been certain of his life outlasting that of the Marshal, he would gladly have pardoned him and trusted to his own vigilance to ward off evil; but that he could not leave her and his children a like thorn in their foot. To himself the final determination to convict his enemies of their designs must have put an end to a condition of almost intolerable tension.

It was not only the scene with Auvergne at Fontainebleau which shows that he was on the watch lest a familiar associate should attempt his life. An incident recorded by the Tuscan envoy points to the same sense of possible danger. Admitted to an audience at the Tuileries, Giovannini heard the King desire all present to withdraw to a distance, so that his view of the great avenue planted by Catherine de Medicis should be unimpeded. Then, signing to the Florentine to approach, he disowned, with a laugh, the interpretation that might be placed upon his order. It was not, he said, because he was afraid, the very disclaimer showing what was in his mind. Other and more secret perils than open murder were apprehended. It had been predicted that four persons would seek to destroy the King by means of poison, and he was said to be always attended by his physician, provided with an antidote.

During April and May his usual visits to Saint-Germain had been omitted. To safeguard his son's inheritance—perhaps his life—demanded at the moment his whole thought and care; and he had been absent in the provinces, where his presence was needed to counteract the intrigues of his enemies and to frustrate their endeavours to create a spirit of discontent in the country.

At Blois, whither he was accompanied by Épernon and Bouillon, whilst refraining from making any direct or specific charge, he spoke to both in a fashion to sound them. The first, truly or falsely, succeeded in satisfying the King of his comparative innocence. Bouillon, interrogated separately, answered at length in vague and confused terms. Although not wholly convinced by his professions of loyalty, Henri for the moment gave no indication of distrust. In neither case was there definite proof of guilt, and, acting on Rosny's advice, he determined to take no present action with regard to them.

Biron had remained so far at a distance in his province of Burgundy, the reiterated and friendly summons sent him by his master notwithstanding. Would he in the end yield and report himself to the King, or would he give colour to all the dark charges against him by refusing obedience to the royal mandate? These must have been the questions in all men's minds as they looked on and awaited the event. In spite of what was known or suspected, he still occupied the ostensible position of the King's trusted servant; and still Henri clung, strangely, persistently, to the hope of transforming the appearance into the reality, of recapturing his old friend's former affection, and bringing him back to the path of rectitude and honour.

At Orléans he now gave him rendezvous, bidding him repair thither for the feast of Corpus Christi, But the feast was over and the King had left Orléans before Biron determined on obedience ; so that, when at last he set out to join the Court, it was towards Fontainebleau that he turned his steps. With what fears and misgivings he came none can tell. He must have become aware that resistance was impossible. Rosny had taken his measures. On the pretext of replacing old cannon by new, he had withdrawn the artillery which had been under the Marshal's charge, leaving him thus without means of defence. Bodies of men, moreover, closing up behind him as he rode towards Fontainebleau, cut off his retreat. He was caught in a snare.

Yet never had captor been in a more merciful mood than his injured master. Bent upon forgiveness, as a man of a different temper might have been bent upon revenge, Henri continued to cherish the hope of saving the culprit from the consequences of his misdeeds.

"He is an unhappy man," he told Rosny ; "I should like to pardon him, to forget all that is past, and to be as good to him as ever. I pity him ; and it goes against my heart to injure a brave man who has served me so long, and with whom I have been on such familiar terms. But I fear that, should I pardon him, he will pardon neither me, my children, nor my realm ; for he has confessed nought, and he treats me like a man who harbours ill thoughts in his heart" ; adding orders that Rosny should assure the Marshal that, if only he would make a clean breast of the past, full forgiveness awaited him.

In the meantime Biron's reception at the palace had not tended to allay his apprehensions. He had found

Henri in the courtyard; and it was observed that when little Vendôme would have flung himself, after his usual fashion, into the arms of his father's friend, the King checked the child, placing him behind him whilst he inclined his head in silent greeting. Mounting the staircase, he reached an uncovered corridor above the courtyard. Then, turning to Biron:

"Pass in," he said briefly, bidding the rest of the company to wait outside.

That long-deferred interview proved decisive. La Fin, the double traitor and informer, was also at Fontainebleau, and had found an opportunity to whisper in Biron's ear that nothing was known. Fortified by this assurance, the Duke persisted in his fatal assumption of injured innocence. He had nothing to tell, nothing to confess. Rosny, acting on the King's directions and striving to induce him to admit his guilt, was met by the same dogged denial of the existence of any subject-matter for confession, with the exception of the intrigues already pardoned by Henri two years earlier.

The unhappy man had sealed his fate. Hearing Rosny's report of failure, the King's long patience was exhausted; and it was determined, at a consultation held between King, Queen, and minister, that Biron, with the other chief conspirator, Auvergne, should be arrested that night. Henri had been convinced that clemency would be a crime.

"He said to a servant of his who repeated it to me," wrote the Florentine Resident, "that he forgave all their designs against his own person; but that it would be to fail in what he owed to himself were he not to leave justice to deal with their machinations against the Dauphin and the realm."

It may be that he had seen or heard of the letter containing Biron's protestations of love and loyalty towards his little son, and that the thought of the unconscious victim at Saint-Germain steadied his hand to strike the final blow.

The sole question was as to the conduct of the affair. Henri would have liked to apprehend the criminals in their beds. He recoiled from the thought of a possible struggle and of bloodshed in the palace. Rosny took a different view, and in the end Rosny prevailed.

To the few who were aware of what was in contemplation the evening was an anxious one. In his small chamber apart, the minister awaited the event, with an escort ready to convey the prisoners to Paris. Midnight had come, and nothing had been done. In the outer room Henri's guests played, conversed, or slumbered. In his private apartment the King and Biron had engaged in a game. The courtiers were dispersing to their several lodgings, when it is believed that Henri made an ultimate appeal to his old comrade to save himself by speech. If so it was vain; Biron persisted in his fatal policy of silence. Then the King bade him a last farewell.

"Adieu," he said, "Baron de Biron."

Upon the words, sinister in their brevity, curiously different interpretations have been put. To Michelet the reversion to the title under which Biron had fought by his master's side during the years of storm and stress they had faced together, represented a reminder of the past—a final call to repentance. To others the farewell, "cruel et laconique," has seemed to express the tardy harshness of a man betrayed.

It was not long before the interpretation of the King's words was supplied to Biron. As he left the royal presence Vitry, Captain of the Guard, laid his hand upon his shoulder and demanded his sword. He was a prisoner.

Auvergne, who had retired earlier to his apartment, was arrested in his bed, and the captives, taken by water to the Arsenal, were quickly lodged in the Bastille. France and its heir were delivered from the peril that had threatened them. With Biron and Auvergne, the conspiracy was deprived of its heads.

It was on a Wednesday that the stroke was dealt. To the King, vacillating long between the dictates of compassion and justice, the very fact that a decision had been taken must have brought relief. On the following Monday he snatched a few hours from graver cares to visit Saint-Germain: "The King arrives at midday, kisses [the Dauphin] and plays with him. The Queen arrives at half-past one; finds Monseigneur the Dauphin at the foot of the grand staircase. She turns suddenly very red, and kisses him on the side of his forehead." Before the end of the week Henri was again at the château, when a singular scene is recorded. There can be no doubt that the Comte d'Auvergne's sister was implicated in his guilt, nor is it conceivable that the King could succeed in altogether blinding himself to this fact. Yet on Saturday, June 22, there was a meeting at

Saint-Germain between Henri and Madame de Verneuil, when he was in a mood as gay and debonair as if no network of intrigue had been escaped and apparently untroubled by the thought that the woman he loved was in league with his enemies.

Arriving alone, he found amusement in watching the child eat his broth, himself drinking what was left of it. "Should any one ask now what the King is doing," he said, "it can be answered that he is taking his broth." There was presently a second arrival. It was the Marquise, who also visited the nursery and caressed her rival's son, though, as those who looked curiously on imagined, with effort. Moreover, when, that same evening, Henri started on his return to Paris, nothing would content him but that she should take the child in his coach to the end of the courtyard, where he was surrendered to his lawful guardians.

Incapable of freeing himself from the fetters that bound him, Henri not only condoned the Marquise's offences but was not ashamed to place in her arms the child he loved, and whose ruin she would, if she could, have compassed. He was, wrote the Florentine envoy, completely enslaved by his passion. On another occasion, about this time, he went still further, and seated the Marquise next the Queen in the Queen's own carriage. It was not strange that when it further became clear that, whilst Biron was to pay the uttermost penalty for his crime, the Comte d'Auvergne was to escape, Marie de Medicis was loud in her complaints.

"The King's life and that of his son is in question," she cried bitterly, "and the mistress carries the day."

She was justified in her charge. The significance of the interruption of the course of justice was clear as daylight to all the world. A commission was issued to the Parlement for the trial of Biron, and in it was no mention of Biron's chief accomplice, Madame de Verneuil's brother, the Comte d'Auvergne.

CHAPTER V

1602—1604

Biron's execution—Pardon of Auvergne—Madame's birth—The nursery at Saint-Germain—The King's children—Monseigneur the Dauphin—Domestic difficulties—Concini and Leonora—Rivalries at Court—The King's illness—Talk of a Spanish marriage—Henri complains to Rosny of his wife—And of Madame de Verneuil—Death of his sister—Rosny opposes the King—The Dauphin's training—Friction between father and son.

"[THE Dauphin] is taken to see the deer hunted by the King go by. . . . He is carried to the King in bed, hurt by a fall he had in chasing the deer. He is holding a stick; I take a twig from the faggot and strike it against his stick, as in fencing. The game pleases him, and he pursues me, laughing, round the room. All the rest of the day he is peaceful and very gay. This day, at five o'clock, the head of the Maréchal de Biron was cut off at the Bastille."

So runs the entry for July 31 in Maître Héroard's journal.

The King, said the Spanish Ambassador, was so *défait* after the execution, that he might have been taken for the man who had been executed. The two accounts are not irreconcilable. Amusing himself with his little son, or hunting the deer, Henri may have sought distraction from the sorrow of a man who has been compelled to deliver up his friend to death.

"To-day I love none but you," he told Rosny, the words marking the loss he had sustained.

Yet he had never wavered in his determination to allow justice to take its course. Biron's guilt was clear. In one respect he showed himself a man of honour. Striving to throw suspicion upon the guiltless, he remained true to his genuine accomplices. It may be that his master was grateful for a silence which made it possible to pardon what was not too manifestly brought to light. The Constable Montmorency, Auvergne, Bouillon, and others—above all, the Marquise—could be the more easily permitted to escape the consequences of their guilt. The part played by Spain and Savoy could be politicly ignored, and only added to the secret reckoning against them, to be settled at a future day.

It was curious that, by one of the caprices to which the multitude is subject, the common people displayed a strange anxiety to honour the memory of the arch-traitor, Biron; whilst Auvergne, faithless to most, remained true to his friend, and swore to bring up with his own an illegitimate child the Marshal had left fatherless.

Auvergne himself made confession and received a pardon. The Constable was likewise forgiven; and Bouillon would doubtless have been treated with no less leniency had he not preferred to ensure his safety by keeping at a distance.

To Biron's brother-in-law, the Duc de la Force, Henri wrote to express his continued affection, coupled with a desire that the Duke's eldest son should be placed near his person. Biron, he told him, had died confessing his guilt, but neither asking pardon, naming his confederates, nor praying to God. "I believe," added the King, "he did not know how. . . . He begged, dying, that all the world might be told that he had died a good Catholic, without being able to say what a Catholic was."

Penitent or impenitent, Biron was dead, and the kingdom was consequently left in comparative tranquillity. The Prince de Joinville, it was true, started a fresh intrigue with Spain; but, treating it as "vraie niaiserie d'enfant," the King punished the culprit no more severely than by a few days' confinement to his own house. Of Biron's accomplices, Auvergne soon regained his place in his master's favour; Bouillon nursed his disappointment at Castres and there hatched new plots; and the Marquise was, unfortunately, too necessary to Henri's happiness to be kept in disgrace.

In November Marie de Medicis gave birth to her eldest daughter, afterwards married to Philip IV. of Spain.

Belonging to the inferior sex, little Madame was greeted with, at the best, resignation. The Queen was said to have wept bitterly; the King, though himself disappointed, did his best to comfort her by saying lightly that, had she not been of her daughter's sex, she would not have been Queen of France, and that, thank God, they were not without means of providing for the child. "My wife," he wrote to Madame de Montglat, "was confined yesterday morning at nine o'clock, with what it pleased God—a girl." A girl, however, opened the way to future possibilities in the way of alliances, already taking shape in Henri's mind. To the Grand-duke of Tuscany he wrote that the Queen had been delivered of a fair daughter, "de sorte que maintenant j'ai mariage."

The more important question of a wife for the Dauphin was also, if informally, under consideration, those around him discussing the possibility of his finding a bride in the Infanta, Anne of Austria, who eventually became his wife. Héroard, taking as usual a favourable view of his charge's intelligence, perceived indications that the idea was not unwelcome to him. "He listens to the stories Mademoiselle de Ventelet tells him of the Infanta, and laughs at them. . . . He was screaming violently. Mademoiselle de Ventelet bids him good morning on behalf of the Infanta. He is appeased at once, and begins to laugh."

A constant visitor at Saint-Germain at all times when he could find leisure to resort thither, it was a strangely assorted group that shared the King's thought and care. César de Vendôme was only an occasional guest at the château, being, by reason of his age, more constantly attendant on his father. But his brother, Alexandre, some three years older than the Dauphin, as well as his sister, had their home there; and to these were presently to be added, in spite of their mother's protests, the son and daughter of the Marquise de Verneuil. Lastly, the children of Marie de Medicis—six in all—were to take, one by one, their places in the royal nurseries.

Over this motley little company Monseigneur the Dauphin, as the years went by, was to reign supreme, not one amongst them venturing to dispute his sovereignty. Save when the King visited Saint-Germain, his son was lord over all. When Henri was at the château, on the other hand, he was punctilious, rough soldier as he was, in demanding due respect from his heir and in enforcing the obedience which others found it difficult to exact from the spoilt child.

"Carried to the court-yard to meet the King," records Héroard on one occasion, "he does not salute him till the King pulls off his hat, putting it on again when the King bids him, 'Be covered, Monsieur.' The Dauphin dances a *branle*, giving his hand to Alexandre Monsieur, the King having bidden him to do so."

Court etiquette was rigidly observed, and the day ended with the baby's shirt being handed to him by his cousin, the Comte de Soissons, Prince of the Blood. On New Year's Eve, passed by the King and Queen at Saint-Germain, the Dauphin was promoted to offer his father his napkin at dinner, and so in peace the year closed.

Making the best of what she must have felt from many points of view to be a bad business, Marie de Medicis appears to have reconciled herself temporarily to the unsatisfactory conditions of her married life. It would nevertheless have required no great insight to perceive that, taking into consideration the characters of husband and wife, and the impossibility that their chosen favourites and counsellors should conduce to peace, storms in the future were inevitable. On the one side was the King, not without a determination to do his duty by the mother of his children in matters practical and material, but wholly destitute of affection for her and liable to be made use of as the tool of another woman. Over against him was Marie de Medicis, with, as friends and confidants, Concini and his wife, distrusted with justice by Henri, rapacious, ambitious, and in all respects dangerous advisers. Towards the end of the year Concini had been entrusted by the Grand-duke with a mission to Spain, making a mystery of the matter and giving out that he was bound for England, though his true destination was known to all. Marie herself was annoyed by the incident, calculated to lessen the small amount of credit she possessed with the King, who told her, with displeasure, that her uncle had treated him better before they had become connected through his marriage. The Florentine, Giovannini, reiterated his entreaty to be recalled. The Queen, he said, did not trust him; Concini was his enemy; old, weary, sick, he now only wanted to be the servant of God.

The rivalries at Court found their reflection at Saint-Germain. The attendants of the infant heir had already inspired him with a marked dislike for his father's special friend, Rosny; against whom, as controlling the finances, they had their private grievances. On the other hand, a scene which took place at the château on the occasion of a visit paid by Concini seems to indicate that his mother's favourites were not more popular.

Displaying his toys, the child pointed out some dolls, representing in miniature the Queen, Madame and Mademoiselle de Guise, with the Marquise de Guercheville, all placed in one of the royal carriages. Leonora was absent from the group.

"'Monsieur,' asked Concini, noticing it, 'where is my wife's place?'

"Saying 'Ah!' he shows him an outside seat at the back of the coach. He will not accept a piece of preserve from the Sieur Concini, . . . draws back, looking at him as if *importuné*."

Another time, again not improbably interpreting correctly the sentiments of those around him, it was observed that when Madame de Verneuil brought her son, a week or two younger than the Dauphin, to pay a visit at the château, the boy regarded "M. de Verneuil" with coldness; and that though he had at first received the mother graciously, he resented the familiarity, when she ventured to touch his hair, with a blow. A significant scene followed.

"Monsieur," asked one of little Verneuil's attendants, "where is M. le Dauphin?"

Striking his own breast the child pointed to himself, "then, being rebuked, indicates M. le Dauphin," whilst his mother looked on with bitterness in her heart. Had not her boy a better right to the title than the son of Marie de Medicis—an ugly piece of flesh and bone, as she told some one about this time, with no likeness to the King and resembling his mother's bad race?

It was in vain that she was advised to put restraint upon herself and to do her duty by the Queen, since God had given her to the King as his wife. "It was not God who did it," she replied with a sigh. In which she may have been right.

The most serious event of the year was the grave illness of Henri, who was considered, though for not more than a few days, to be in actual danger. To all concerned these days brought home a sense of the precarious condition of a kingdom depending for security and tranquillity upon a single life. Henri gone, what would ensue? Who would grasp the sceptre he would let fall? Who would seize the reins of government and rule in the name of the infant King? Soissons, turbulent and ambitious, Conti, feeble and incapable, even the boy Condé might claim the right to act as his guardian; and the thought of the child in the hands of unscrupulous men ready to make capital out of his helplessness might well cause the father to tremble. Sending for the boy's portrait, he lamented, as he looked at it, that he should be left so young and so defenceless. What steps were possible to minimise the risk, should his illness prove fatal, he lost no time in taking. Incompetent as the Queen was in many respects, she could be counted upon to watch over her son's safety and to guard his inheritance; and summonses were dispatched to all provincial governors to bid them repair to Fontainebleau, where the King then was, that they might tender their oaths of obedience to Marie, as guardian to her son.

In two days the present danger was at an end; but the memory of it served to quicken Henri's desire to provide against the contingency he had then contemplated, both by acquainting his wife with the management of public affairs and by establishing a friendly relationship between her and Rosny, whom he could rely upon as a trustworthy adviser. She was also given a place on the Council-board, and was encouraged to show a personal interest in what went on there.

It may be that the promptness of the King's action in assuring to her, in case of his death, the position belonging to her as his lawful wife, had removed for the moment the Queen's ever-recurrent apprehensions of practical danger to herself and her son from the influence exercised over the King by Madame de Verneuil, and was the cause of a renewal of friendly relations between the two women. At all events it appeared, from the subsequent deposition of the Comte d'Auvergne, that Marie had taken the singular step of inviting his sister to Fontainebleau at the time that Henri was lying there ill; and that, upon his recovery, a species of reconciliation had taken place, the Marquise assuring the Queen that she would have reason to be satisfied with her future conduct; Marie, for her part, promising her, in that case, her affection. If a truce of this kind was proclaimed it was not destined to continue long in force.

In the meantime recent events had in no wise put an end to the desire entertained in some quarters for a Spanish alliance, and the Dauphin's attendants were still doing what lay in their power to pave the way for the marriage which eventually took place. In October a visit was paid to Saint-Germain by Don Sanchez de la Serta, on his way to Flanders, accompanied by de Taxis, Resident Ambassador; when the child received his guests with gracious courtesy, was made to dance before them, and drank to the health of the Infanta. Here would be a servant for her one of these days, observed his future *gouverneur*, M. de Souvré, to the

Ambassador, as the two watched the boy at his dinner, and the Spaniard responded with cordiality.

"As the world goes," he replied, "they are born for each other."

The Queen had not been long in learning the precise worth of Madame de Verneuil's promises, and the tranquillity in the royal household following upon Henri's illness had been short-lived. It could scarcely, indeed, have been otherwise. The King's passion was a perennial source of discord ; the Concini, whose influence continued unabated, were not likely to advocate a policy of conciliation, nor to further the good relations the King had striven to establish between his wife and Rosny ; nor was Marie a woman to bow so far to necessity as to attempt by gentle means to detach her husband from the influence she feared and resented. Henri longed for a quiet life ; for toleration, if not approval. From Marie—and she is hardly to be blamed for it—he received neither. Bitterly he complained to Rosny of his domestic discomfort.

"I have neither companionship, nor pleasure, nor comfort from my wife," he told the minister. "Either she cannot, or she will not, be complaisant and gentle in conversation ; nor will she conform herself in any respect to my humour and temperament. When, coming in, I approach in order to kiss her, to caress her, and laugh with her, she looks so cold and disdainful that I am constrained to depart in anger and to seek my recreation elsewhere." His cousin of Guise—afterwards Princesse de Conti—had been his refuge when she was at the palace. Though she told him the truth—*mes vérités*—it was so pleasantly done that he took no offence. And he wished Rosny would represent to the Queen that she was not going the right way to keep him at home.

Rosny may well have doubted whether his intervention would have availed to mend matters. Yet it was a moment when a different policy from that pursued by the Queen might have seemed to have a chance of success. With justification enough and to spare for remaining inaccessible to her husband's fitful advances, her wisdom would have been to ignore her wrongs and to attempt to profit by the opportunities afforded her by Madame de Verneuil's conduct to win him back. The Marquise, besides being suspected of fresh intrigues with Spain, as well as of more personal infidelities, was not at the pains to disguise her lack of affection for the King, and met his reproaches with angry insolence. Varying her methods, she would at times irritate him by assuming the airs of a *dévote*, in no way imposing upon a man never lacking in sagacity and shrewdness ; and when taxed by Henri with treasonable practices, she answered by a flat denial of the charges brought against her, adding that, as he grew old he had become so distrustful and suspicious that it was impossible to live with him—that their connection brought her no advantage and much annoyance, including the hatred of his wife, to whom she alluded in terms so outrageous that he came near, as he told Rosny, to striking her on the cheek. When, further, he attempted to induce her to surrender the promise of marriage in her possession, she replied with a defiance. He might seek it elsewhere; from her he would never obtain what he wanted. Upon which they had parted, the King swearing that she should be made to find it.

The document in question was a constant cause of disquiet to the Queen. Henri, it is true, characterised the pledge it contained, hampered as it was with unfulfilled conditions, as mere "niaiserie." But it constituted, nevertheless, in some sort a serious menace to the rights of the Queen and her son. The age was one when promises of marriage, however irregular, had an indeterminate binding force, and were dangerous weapons in hostile hands. That Rosny and Villeroy, the King's two chief officers of State, should have thought it necessary about this time to assure the Queen that, whatever befell, she and the Dauphin would have their support, is proof that her fears were not wholly chimerical.

There were other disquieting facts. Henri was known to be attached to Madame de Verneuil's son, appearing to make as much account of him as of the Dauphin. He had called his wife's attention to a resemblance between the two boys, and had resented the Queen's cold reply that a likeness was impossible, since her son resembled herself and her uncle the Grand-duke. Henri had also been heard, caressing the Marquise's child, to compare him favourably with the Queen's.

"See how amiable this son of mine is, and how like me," he had observed. "He is not a stubborn child like the Dauphin!"

It was indeed a curious fact, to which attention has been drawn by M. Batifol, that, whilst the Vendôme brothers were far from inheriting the qualities of their gentle-natured mother, the son and daughter of Madame de Verneuil, cold, ill-tempered and masterful as she was, were gentle and affectionate children, commending themselves to all. The comparison instituted by the King, no doubt repeated to Marie, was not calculated to allay apprehensions accentuated by his behaviour in connection with the death of his sister, which occurred early in 1604.

Henri had been deeply affected by the event, dismissing the nobles who had come, after the fashion of the day, to offer him consolation, and facing his sorrow alone. To the papal nuncio, who expressed the Pope's regrets for the loss of the Duchess's soul, he administered a stern rebuke. To think worthily of God, he told the ecclesiastic, it must be believed that grace was capable of fitting any sinner, even as he drew his last breath, to enter heaven. He felt no doubt of his sister's salvation. He would not insist upon the nuncio wearing mourning for her—a difficulty had been made—but without it he must not present himself at Court.

So far Henri's conduct commands general sympathy. It is a different matter with regard to other complications produced by the death of Catherine de Bar. With more than questionable taste her brother divided her French property between the Queen and Madame de Verneuil, assigning to each one of the houses he had presented to the Duchess. Worse followed, or would have followed had the King not possessed in Rosny a servant bold enough to withstand his wishes; for Henri was bent on bestowing upon the son of the Marquise no less a gift than the county of Foix, with the duchy of Armagnac, rendered available by his sister's death. Rosny was firm in his resistance to the proposal. The thing, he told the King plainly, could not be done; neither Council nor Parlement would consent. The appanages in question belonged by right to the Dauphin, or, should he die, to his sister. Henri, in spite of anger and disappointment, had no alternative but to give way. Defeated on one point, however, he started a fresh scheme, no less detrimental to the claims of his lawful son. The Duc de Montpensier was in a precarious state of health; and at his death the important government of Normandy, again usually held by the heir to the throne, would become vacant. Henri now proposed to confer it upon the son of the Marquise, unfolding this fresh scheme to the Queen herself, who met it with a just opposition. To have carried it into effect would have been to lend colour and substance to every claim put forward by Madame de Verneuil on behalf of her son, and Henri cannot have been ignorant that such would be the result.

The state of the King's mind indicated by his action in these matters gave additional importance to the fact that, in these early years, the will of the Dauphin and that of his father were apt to come into sharp and direct collision, the comparison he had made between his two little sons, to the disadvantage of his heir, being thereby explained. The effect of training and discipline is quickly apparent, and already the poor child at Saint-Germain was showing it.

Confided to the care of a coarse-minded and violent woman, most unfit for her post, severity alternated with over-indulgence. Corporal punishment, intimidation, and menaces, were the means taken to enforce obedience. A mason would be introduced, who prepared to carry the child away in his hod ; a locksmith displayed the instruments of his craft, telling him that they were used to drive nails into those who were stubborn. Worse still, a bunch of birch rods were let down through the chimney, and he was given to understand that an angel had brought them from heaven. At the same time he was never permitted to forget that he was a person of importance, was encouraged to domineer over his brothers, sisters, and attendants ; was flattered by all, and was the centre of attention. It was scarcely possible that he should not be self-willed, and bent upon having his own way ; if he was afraid of the whip, administered almost from the cradle, it could not be expected to exercise a moral influence, and served rather to rouse and strengthen his resistance than to reduce him to penitence. Héroard, combining with a dog-like devotion to his little master and an inordinate estimate of his gifts and qualities a clear perception of his faults and failings, displays from time to time regret for the methods in use ; but except in the matter of health his opinions were of small account, and Madame de Montglat reigned supreme.

The child and his usual surroundings being what they were, it was natural that when father and son were brought into close contact friction should ensue.

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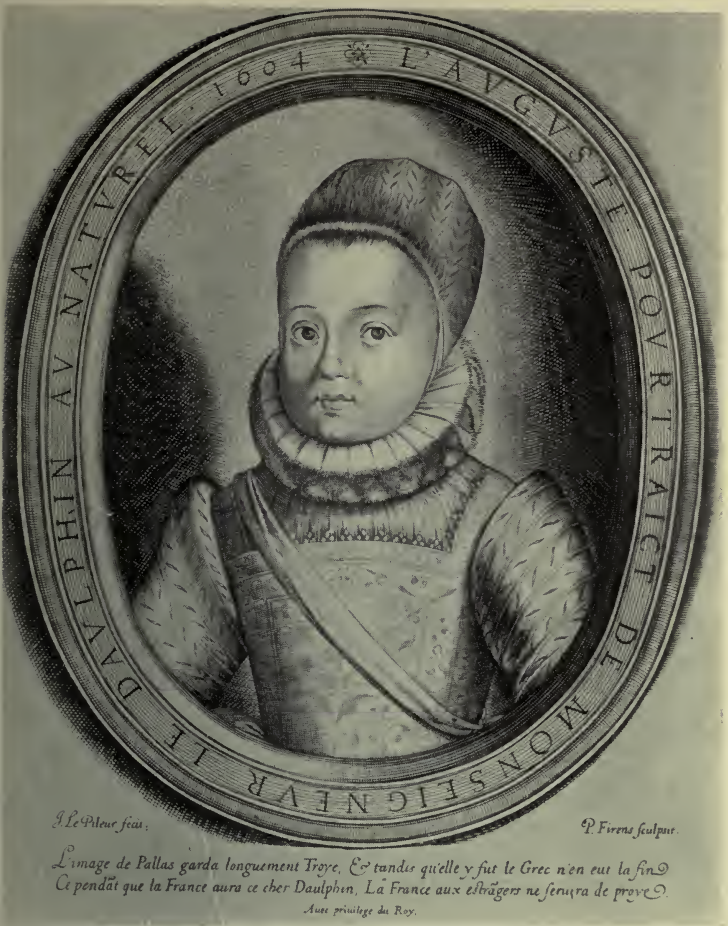
L'AVGVSTE POVRTRAICT DE MONSEIGNEVR LE DAVLPHIN AV NATVREL · 1604
J. Le Pileur fecit.
P. Firens ſculpsit.
L'image de Pallas garda longuement Troye, & tandis qu'elle y fut le Grec n'en eut la fin
Ce pendãt que la France aura ce cher Daulphin, La France aux eſtrãgers ne ſeruira de proye.
Auec priuilege du Roy.

From an engraving by P. Firens, after a drawing by G. le Pileur.

LOUIS XIII. AS DAUPHIN, AT THE AGE OF THREE YEARS.

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Both were strong-willed, both indisposed to yield. Henri's ideas of discipline were those of a soldier. Obedience must be prompt at the moment he was disposed to exact it; though, that moment past, his orders could be safely disregarded. "It will be observed," wrote Malherbe of some fresh court regulation, "in the same way as the command he issued lately that all the world, even in his absence, should be bareheaded in his chamber. An hour later everybody was covered there, including the servants themselves." In the same way, there were times when the Dauphin's ill-temper might be tolerated by his father, or even afford him amusement; whilst at others he would punish the child's defiance of authority with undue severity.

"The King comes to see him," wrote Héroard in January 1604, when the boy was not yet two and a half, "and plays with him gaily. The Dauphin is put into such a bad temper that he nearly bursts himself with screaming, and all was in so great confusion that I had not the courage to observe what he was doing, except that, crying very much, he wanted to beat all the world. Long afterwards, he is whipped." Again, in March, "Taken to the King's chamber, he threatens him with the whip. He grows stubborn, wishes to go to his own room. Brought to that of the Queen, he continues the same. The King orders him to be whipped. He is whipped by Madame de Montglat. Only quieted by preserve given him by the Queen, having tried to beat and scratch the Queen. Taken to the new buildings, he is roughly handled by the King."

To the mother, looking on and aware that the child, as well as herself, had a rival in his father's affections, scenes of this kind, unimportant in themselves, may have been invested with significance, and she may have felt that her boy's baby passions were working against him.

CHAPTER VI

1604

Recall of the Jesuits—The Queen and Madame de Verneuil—The Marquise's children placed at Saint-Germain—Discovery of the plot of d'Entragues—The King's clemency.

IN the winter of 1603-4 Henri-Quatre committed what has been widely regarded as a grave blunder. This was the readmission of the Jesuits to France.

Their expulsion from the kingdom had been the consequence of the attempt made, in 1594, upon the King's life, ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to their influence. It is clear from the circular letter written by Henri after his escape that he, no less than others, held the Order responsible for the danger he had run. No information, he observed, had been extracted from the culprit, save the fact that he had passed three years at the Jesuit college, where it was to be presumed that he had received this good instruction. The King, the Parlement, the Sorbonne, and the University of Paris were agreed in their determination to make use of the opportunity to expel the Society from France, and for close upon ten years Henri had been firm in resisting the endeavours made to induce him to reconsider his decision and to consent to their return. If he had two lives, he once said lightly, he would willingly sacrifice one of them to satisfy his Holiness. Having but one, he must preserve it for the Pope's service and for the welfare of his people.

In the years that had elapsed since Jean Châtel's blow had been struck the King's attitude had undergone a notable change, and, in the teeth of the opposition offered to the measure, he had now determined upon readmitting the Society. His motives in doing so were doubtless mixed. Those to whom, judging him by the change of creed by which he won a throne, he pre-eminently represents the principle of indifference or opportunism in religious matters, will naturally regard his action as a concession to political expediency. Yet there may have been another explanation. By the testimony of contemporaries, confirmed by the evidence afforded by his life and language, the desire he testified to reconcile conflicting parties was combined not only with a simple faith in God, but with unquestioning and unwavering loyalty to the Church of his adoption. His correspondence, says the editor of his "Lettres Intimes," proves that he was very religious ; in familiar intercourse he displayed sentiments that were never paraded. His boy was carefully and strictly trained in the observance of the rites of the Church and in the knowledge of its tenets, was taken to confession when still walking in leading-strings, the King himself listening to his repetition of the Paternoster. Henri was moreover curiously anxious to make converts. His endeavours to induce his sister to follow his example have been seen. Upon Sully, too, he brought to bear all the pressure possible alike as master and friend ; whilst a few days before his death he was apparently engaged in controversy with M. de la Force, also a Huguenot.

" My friend," he is quoted as saying, " the Roman religion is not so full of idolatry as I formerly believed."

With loyal adherence to the Church he had joined a strong spirit of religious toleration was combined. The Edict of Nantes proved it on the one side ; and if policy and diplomacy had their share in determining his present line of conduct, there is no reason to disbelieve his own assertion that he was actuated by worthier motives. A Jesuit, named Cotton, had also acquired considerable influence over him ; giving rise to the *mot* that, now that the King had his ears full of cotton, he listened to no one.

From whatever cause, he was resolute in carrying out his purpose ; his reply to the protests of the Parlement being made in a tone proving that remonstrance would be useless. It contained an emphatic and curious vindication—coming from the ex-Huguenot—of the Order so generally unpopular. How could men, he demanded, be charged with ambition who were pledged to refuse dignities or bishoprics ? The opposition offered to them by ecclesiastics was due to the quarrel existing from all time between ignorance and knowledge. Two classes of men, in particular, were adverse to the proposed measure—Churchmen of evil life and those belonging to the Protestant religion : a fact, added the King, increasing the estimation in which he held the Order. If the Sorbonne had condemned them it was without knowing them. The University had occasion to regret their absence, since it had become a desert in consequence of it ; and scholars, in spite of all decrees to the contrary, had sought them, both in France and abroad. If one Jesuit had been involved in the attempt upon his life, was that a reason that all should suffer? Should every one of the apostles have been driven away because of a single Judas? It was said that they were employed by Spain. France also should make use of them, and God had reserved for him the glory of effecting their re-establishment.

To Rosny, strongly adverse to the proposed measure, Henri adopted another line of argument. Two courses, he told his friend, lay before him: either he should admit the Order on the strength of their protestations of loyalty, or he must exclude them with greater severity than heretofore, using all possible rigour so as to keep them at a distance, "in which case there is no doubt that they will be rendered desperate, and will make attempts upon my life, rendering it so wretched and languishing, always in dread of poison or assassination . . . that I should be better dead."

Rosny yielded. His judgment might be against the re-establishment of the Order as a political step, but he loved his master. Rather than that the King should be reduced to the condition he described, he said, let the Jesuits or any other sect be established in the realm! The Council submitted to the King's will, and the thing was done.

That he acted not without a knowledge of perils to which the measure might give rise is indicated by the instructions he is said to have given the Queen as to her conduct with regard to the Society in case of his death. She was to treat them well, but was to be on her guard against their undue increase, and was in especial to prevent their acquiring a foothold on the frontiers.

If the measure had been taken by Henri partly in the hope of ensuring peace and quiet it was not destined to fulfil that object. He was to enjoy little respite from danger and anxiety, so far as public affairs were concerned.

At home a semi-breach with the Marquise de Verneuil might again have afforded Marie de Medicis a chance, had she known how to avail herself of it, of strengthening her own influence. Being, to quote M. Dussieux, "une des femmes les plus complètement ennuyeuses et maladroites qui se puissent imaginer," she let the opportunity slip; and by May 1604 the King, angry and distrustful of the Marquise, but incapable of freeing himself from her fetters, was bent upon summoning her to Fontainebleau and supplying her with every facility for clearing herself from the fresh doubts he entertained of her fidelity and of her complicity in the designs of his enemies. Furthermore, he required of the Queen that the Marquise and her children should be graciously received at the palace, and that the Dauphin and his sister should be brought thither from Saint-Germain to be present on the occasion.

It could not be expected that Marie should submit without a struggle. Apart from personal feeling, she had good reason to refuse to countenance the King's infatuation. Ever on the watch to seize an advantage, her rival was doing her best, in view of Henri's death, and perhaps that of the Dauphin, to form a party in the State which would support her, should an opportunity occur. Sillery, about to become Chancellor, was gained over and could not be counted upon to oppose his master in any project, however prejudicial to his wife and heir; and at the present moment Madame de Verneuil was engaged in the endeavour to induce the widowed Duchesse de Longueville—who betrayed her to the Queen—to marry the young Duke to her little daughter. The boy was the representative of one of the first four houses of France, and a match between him and Catherine de Vendôme had been in question. The living, however, the Marquise boasted, were of more account than the dead, and her daughter might well be preferred to Gabrielle's. Five great personages, she told the Duchess, had pledged themselves to forward her interests. At present their names were suppressed, but she promised to supply them were the marriage arranged. Though when the King broached the subject to Marie herself she merely replied that the *donzella* might seem over-young, she was none the less much disturbed, according to the Florentine envoy, both by the special matter at issue and by the small amount of affection displayed by the King for herself and her son.

She determined that, at all events, her children should not be brought to Fontainebleau to be placed on an equality with those of the Marquise, to suffer comparisons possibly to their disadvantage, and to run the risk of being treated with even less distinction by their father. Reports were current of the Marquise's boasts, and of how, when the Dauphin was discussed and praised in her presence, she declared her son was the handsomer of the two, and would have the stronger arms. The Queen resolved that the children should not meet, sending strict instructions that her boy should be detained at Saint-Germain on the pretext of a cold.

With regard to the Marquise's visit a sharp contest ensued. Henri was bent upon carrying his point and having her received at Fontainebleau ; the Queen was equally determined. Messages between husband and wife were exchanged through Sillery, who told Marie, on the King's behalf, that she was preparing the Dauphin's ruin by her conduct, since Madame de Verneuil would be in a position to plead the Queen's hatred of her and her children, and Henri would be compelled to guarantee her safety by according her the governments and strongholds she demanded.

To this menace Marie retorted by saying that, in the event of his carrying it out, it would be the King, rather than herself, who would work ruin to the Dauphin and the realm. Neither was inclined to yield, and in the end Henri mounted his horse and rode forth to meet the Marquise, on her way to the palace, leaving Rosny to intervene in the dispute and to endeavour to induce his wife to consent, if only for a day, to the proposed visit.

Such was the condition of things when Rosny, Sillery, and Villeroy, Secretary of State, met in consultation. The Privy Council, called together at Fontainebleau, were not unnaturally indignant that the transaction of public affairs should be thus interrupted. It was important to arrange an armistice, if not a lasting peace, between the domestic belligerents. Pressure was brought to bear upon the Queen to persuade her to give way and to abandon a line of conduct undeniably capable of being used by the Marquise to her detriment and that of her son.

Marie, thus pressed, submitted. Though under protest, she consented to receive her rival, for a single day, at the palace. The sacrifice was, after all, not demanded of her. Having met the Marquise at one of the stages of her journey, and too impatient to await the arrival of the courier who was to convey the Queen's decision, the King accompanied the travelling party to Paris, a visit to Saint-Germain serving as a transparent excuse for the journey.

On his return to Fontainebleau the Queen was in a more placable mood. Having behaved with dignity and self-restraint in an intolerable position, she had enlisted public opinion on her side, and the consciousness of support may have softened her. Rosny, showing himself in especial her friend, told his master, in his usual plain language, that had he not to deal with any one as good and prudent as the Queen, he would find that his neglect of her, for the sake of a woman who had no other object save that of troubling the realm and injuring the Dauphin, was calculated to operate to his own disadvantage. The Queen's behaviour, he added, had won her praise and consideration from all.

Thus admonished, Henri admitted that the Marquise indulged mischievous plans and ideas, and assured the minister that he had no thought of entrusting her with governments or strongholds. Peace was restored, and for a brief space tranquillity reigned at the palace. The King had finally determined upon the step—

always urged by Marie—of removing the Verneuil children from their mother's hands and placing them at Saint-Germain, where the boy would no longer be available as an instrument for those hatching treasonable schemes. The events of the summer were to prove that the measure was not unnecessary.

During the month of June facts were brought to light rendering certain what had been matter of suspicion—namely, the plot called by the name of its chief promoter, the Sieur d'Entragues, father to the Marquise. The main feature of this fresh conspiracy was an arrangement with de Taxis, late Spanish Ambassador at Paris, to the effect that the unfortunate promise of marriage, now in the hands of d'Entragues, should be consigned to King Philip, who was to act as protector of the Marquise's son and to recognise in him the heir to the French throne. Child and mother were to take refuge in the Spanish Netherlands; whilst the lives of the King and the Dauphin were to be attempted by the once-pardoned traitor, Auvergne.

The plot was discovered in time, and was promptly exposed. Conducted through an English agent named Morgan, it came to the ears of James I., was revealed by him to Henri without delay, and was thus frustrated.

As to the guilt of d'Entragues and Auvergne there could be no question. Both, indeed, in turn avowed it. Madame de Verneuil was brazen in her denial of complicity, but no one believed her. Yet Henri, helpless in the hands of a woman he knew in his heart to be false in every sense of the word, again strove to save her and her kin from the consequences of their crimes. The Council would have shown a wholesome severity and have put the culprits to death; but the King barred the way. Should her father and brother lose their lives—even were the Marquise herself permitted to escape—what connection would be possible in the future between her and the man who had acted as their executioner? If they were to live, however, one step was proved to be absolutely necessary, and this the King took. Formally, and before witnesses, d'Entragues was forced to surrender the document which had been the cause of so much trouble. The promise of the King to marry her rival was at last placed in the Queen's hands, and a principal weapon was wrested from her rival. By the formal legitimation of the Verneuil children Henri also accentuated the irregularity of their birth.

Once again his enemies had failed in their attempts to destroy him. Nevertheless the discovery of their intrigues had been a shock; and in a mood of dejection the King spoke to the Duc de Montpensier of the designs upon his life and the chances that his wife and son would be left unprotected; embracing the Duke with tears in his eyes when he gave him the assurance that, in case of disaster, his life and fortune would be placed at the feet of the Dauphin and his mother.

Meantime little Verneuil, the unconscious figurehead of the conspiracy, was relegated to a place of safety. By the middle of June he and his sister were installed at Saint-Germain, where the King and Queen were staying at the time.

The introduction of his new playfellows to the

Dauphin took place one evening when supper was in progress.

"Monsieur," some one told him, "here is another *féfé* [brother] come to see you."

"Yet another *féfé*?" he replied. "Where is he?"

He looked hard at the new-comers as they were brought in. Then, lifted down from his chair, he advanced coldly to bestow a greeting upon the little boy, who, perhaps tired by his journey, and ill at ease in his new surroundings, remained leaning against the arm of a chair, his eyes on the ground, refusing to respond to his host's advances. And thus the acquaintance was inaugurated.

The Queen had carried her point. The small pretender was in safe keeping—his mother deprived, to quote the Tuscan resident, of "la mercanzia della sua bottega." Yet the arrangement was not unattended by disadvantages, and the very fact that the Marquise's children and their servants were under the same roof as her own son and daughter occasioned the Queen no little disquiet. It was known that, to ensure her children's welfare, Madame de Verneuil had done her best to propitiate those in charge of the Dauphin; and Marie was haunted by alarm lest opportunities should offer to work ill to the boy. The apprehension, in days when poison was freely used, was not altogether chimerical, and a letter addressed to her by a *dévote*, named the Madre Passitea, had quickened her fears. Twice, according to this lady, had the Dauphin, through the mercy of God, escaped this special peril. The same danger now threatened him, and none could tell with what result.

Notwithstanding the terrors by which the Queen was tormented, she was not inclined to fail in kindness towards the new inmates of the château. On the morning after their arrival she had the Dauphin and the little Verneuil brought to her together, and made them both "bonne chère." For the future the two boys, almost exactly of an age, were constant playmates; though the advantage to the Dauphin of the companionship was neutralised in great measure by the recognition on his own part and that of all around him of the difference in their position. To the Marquise's son the Dauphin was "mon maître," whilst the Dauphin would allude to his half-brother as "petit Vaneuil."

The proceedings against the conspirators were strangely delayed. Not until the end of the year were d'Entragues and Auvergne in confinement; and from the first it was feared by those in a position to judge that the Marquise would be allowed to escape the chastisement of her crime. The Chancellor, Sillery, whose eyes had been opened to her true character, sent for the Florentine envoy and expressed his apprehensions that no just severity would be used towards the offenders; requesting Giovannini to counsel the Queen as to her course of conduct and to acquaint her with the danger involved to herself and her son.

Sillery was probably anxious to clear himself indirectly in Marie's eyes from any suspicion of complicity; for there could be little doubt that she was fully aware of the importance of the issues at stake; she had indeed done her best to represent the matter in its true light to the King, though her intervention had not been attended with success. Henri had made excuses, and had given evasive answers ; telling her plainly, in the end, that she was too vindictive. He was, in fact, determined to shut his eyes to the full extent of the Marquise's guilt ; and, at all times inclined to pardon, it could scarcely be anticipated that he would prove implacable when the woman he loved was in question. There was no appeal against his decision ; in July Madame de Verneuil was not only at large but had been allowed to visit her children at Saint-Germain, being admitted to the presence of the Dauphin, against whom the plot had been laid.

On this occasion she apparently did her best to propitiate the favour of the child, who showed no liking for his guest. Refusing, until compelled to perform the act of courtesy by his *gouvernante*, to give her his hand in farewell, he was only induced with manifest reluctance to assure her that he would love his *féfé*, her son.

" And he will be your servant," was the reply of the Marquise, made, as may well be believed, with no less reluctance. It was not as the servant of Marie de Medicis' son that she regarded her own.

CHAPTER VII

1604

The Dauphin at Fontainebleau—Life at the palace—The King's affection for his son—Visit of the Comte de Sora—Quarrel between King and Dauphin—Its results—The conspirators—Father and son.

DURING this year the Dauphin paid his first visit to his birthplace, Fontainebleau. It was the custom with the King and Queen to spend the autumn months there. Marie, no less than her husband, liked the place, and it offered a welcome variety after life in Paris. The Louvre, it was true, was no longer what it had been when Henri brought his bride thither, and, looking with half incredulous wonder at the worn furniture and faded hangings of the dimly lighted chambers, the daughter of the Medici had questioned whether this could in truth be the palace of the French Kings. Marie had quickly transformed her new dwelling-place into an abode more in harmony with the traditions of her race; had had the walls painted in delicately tinted arabesques, laid down rich carpets, and worked such other changes as were necessary to make it a fit setting for the royalty of France. But Fontainebleau had attractions of its own; and at such times as the Louvre was handed over to be cleaned, or when the country invited a visit, King and Queen equally rejoiced to resort to it.

In what Henri termed "nos delicieux déserts de Fontainebleau," comparative freedom from the conventional restraints of court life was enjoyed. Only a limited number of the household could be lodged there, guests being at times requested to bring their own beds and other necessaries. Few dresses sufficed Marie on these occasions, and the straw hats sent her from Italy were brought into requisition, as, sheltered from the sun by a great parasol, she fed the birds or looked on at the fishing for carp. Two of these remarkable fish had been captured, she wrote once to a friend, one of them at least eight hundred years old, if not much more—the other numbering some three or four centuries. "I ate the head of the fish," she added, "and enjoyed rummaging in it, as if it had been some fine cabinet."

Men and women alike hunted in the forest, sharing the King's favourite pastime.

Into the pleasures of this holiday resort the Dauphin was to be initiated; passing through Paris on his way thither, where the greeting of the crowd may have owed part of its enthusiasm to the remembrance of the plots lately laid against his life. In spite of the failure of the conspiracy, its features were fresh in all men's minds; and to the King in especial the events of the summer must have helped to bring home the thought of the activity of the hostile forces at work, and convinced him—did he need convincing—that not alone for him, but for his child, the assassin lay in wait.

Yet the autumn weeks passed pleasantly at Fontainebleau, notwithstanding ebullitions of temper on the part of the Dauphin—accustomed to rule at Saint-Germain—which may have again served to make the Queen fear that comparisons might be instituted to his disadvantage. Already, at the château, he had developed a spirit of angry jealousy with regard to the children who shared the King's attention, indignant at one moment because his father had kissed Alexandre Monsieur—now, by virtue of his admission into the Order of the Knights of Malta, termed M. le Chevalier—again, keeping César de Vendôme at a distance, and rubbing his hand angrily on his frock when the boy presumed to kiss it. The cushions on which the Chevalier and his sister knelt at their prayers had to be removed—"Pray God on the ground," he bade them. Even his own little sister was only permitted the honour of kissing his foot, and when the King had inadvertently seated himself in the place the Dauphin was accustomed to occupy at Mass he was at once turned out. "He is in my place. Get out of it," ordered the infant autocrat; and the King obeyed.

The temper thus displayed was not unlikely to bring him into collision with his father, and to cause anxiety to those about him when the two were in daily intercourse. The visit to Fontainebleau, nevertheless, began well. On reaching the palace the King was found awaiting the travellers at the entrance of the pavilion, receiving his heir with kisses and embraces; and on the following day the child was introduced to all the entertainment the place could be made to supply.

Flinging aside for the moment all cares of state, Henri devoted himself to exhibiting the gardens in person to the new-comer; took him in the early morning to waken the Queen; and during the following days did his best to minister to his little son's amusement. The various birds were displayed by the King—swans, pheasants, ducks; the child being given bread to throw to them. The fountains, too, were a special delight, the Dauphin turning the water off and on with his own hands, and wetting his father as he did so. He would have been hard to please had he not been satisfied with the entertainment provided for him; and though fretful and ill-tempered at times, and still apt to resent any attention paid to his companions, all on the whole went well.

Again and again Héroard's narration calls up pictures not without pathos when it is remembered how short was the time that father and son were to be together. "At five the King comes home from hunting. [The Dauphin] goes running to meet the King, who grows pale with joy and gladness, kisses and holds him long embraced; leads him into his cabinet, walks up and down, holding him by the hand, only changing the hand when he turns, without saying a word, whilst he listens to M. de Villeroy making his reports to the King. He cannot leave the King, nor the King him. . . . Put to bed at half-past eight, the King comes and kisses him. The King exceedingly happy." Such incidents, often repeated, are curious interludes in the life of danger, care, anxiety, and coarse pleasure led by Henri.

A scene of another kind must have struck those looking on at it strangely, with its superficial pretence of amity, whilst in the minds of all must have been present the blow that had been so lately aimed at father and son.

A Spaniard, the Count de Sora, Equerry to the Archduke, and on his way to Spain, is presented to the Dauphin by his father.

"My son," asks Henri, "what will you send to Spain by M. le Comte?"

"I kiss her hands," says the child, falling at once into his part.

"Is [the Infanta] your mistress? Do you love her well?"

"Like my heart," replies the Dauphin, repeating his lesson; and M. le Comte, perhaps conscious that the King is laughing in his sleeve, takes leave of the child who, had the plot in which Spain was implicated been crowned with success, would have died by the traitor's hand.

Notwithstanding the boy's real and increasing affection for his father—an affection growing with his years—the visit was not destined to prove altogether successful; and towards the end of October a serious quarrel took place; the episode showing the King in a new light—"très-tendre," to quote the editors of the doctor's journal, "très-taquin, très-emporté, et très-enfant."

Absorbed in a favourite toy—a drum working by springs—the boy had been taken to his father against his will, and trouble at once ensued. Having omitted to uncover in the King's presence, Henri ordered him sharply to take off his hat; and, when the child found a difficulty in obeying, removed it with his own hands. Already pre-disposed to wrath, nothing more was needed to put the Dauphin into a thoroughly bad temper.

"He is angry. Then the King takes away his drum and drum-sticks. This was still worse. 'My hat, my drum, my drumsticks.' The King, to annoy him, puts the hat on his own head. 'I want my hat.' The King strikes him with it on the head. He is angry, and the King is angry with him. The King takes him by the wrists, and lifts him into the air, extending his little arms in a cross. '*Hé!* you hurt me! *Hé!* my drum! *Hé!* my hat!' The Queen gives him back his hat; then his drumsticks. It was a little tragedy."

Carried away still enraged, he could neither be comforted nor quieted in spite of all that could be done. Having been whipped, he kicked and scratched Madame de Montglat. At last his nurse, possibly more pitiful than the *gouvernante*, took him apart and reasoned with him gravely.

"Monsieur," she said, "you have been very stubborn. You must not be so. You must obey *papa*."

"Kill *Mamanga*,"[1] he said with a great sigh, "she is wicked. I will kill all the world. I will kill God."

"Ah, no, Monsieur," replied the nurse. "You drink His blood every day when you drink wine."

The child stopped short.

"I drink the blood of the good God?" he

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[1] Madame de Montglat.

asked. "Then He must not be killed," and, in spite of sobbing sighs, allowed himself to be appeased.

The effect of the incident did not pass off for some time. The Dauphin, hurt and strained by the King's rough usage, was at first ill and nervous; and, when recovered, continued to nurse his resentment. Sent for by his father, it was necessary to compel him to obey the summons; he was quiet and sullen in his presence, and anxious to escape from it, parading his indifference to the King's movements. When all were crowding to the windows to watch Henri set forth to hunt, he remained in his place, merely asking coldly if *papa* were going hunting? His free and fearless bearing was replaced by shrinking and timidity, and, taken with Verneuil to visit the King and Queen in bed, he withdrew in sulky silence to his mother's side, leaving his father, contrary to his custom, to his half-brother. When Verneuil, however, would have in turn approached the Queen the Dauphin made it clear that this would not be permitted, giving the boy, still without a word, a blow which caused him, also in silence, to retire discomfited. With the Queen at least Verneuil was to have no dealings.

Even after the children had quitted Fontainebleau and were again at Saint-Germain the Dauphin continued, with singular tenacity, to cherish the remembrance of his wrongs. Hearing that the King and Queen were expected at the château, he expressed his regret, and displayed an unwillingness to be taken to meet them, and though Héroard set himself, by means of a combination of promises and threats, to produce a better frame of mind, his efforts were not attended with success.

" You will, then, not have the fine drum and beautiful drumsticks that [the King] is bringing you," he warned him. " He will give them to M. de Verneuil. *Eh bien !*" as the child flung himself upon him in an access of fury, " *eh bien !* you beat me. What do you wish *papa* to do with that drum ?"

" ' Let him give it to Moucheu de Veneuil,' he replied, shaking his head as if it was a thing he despised. He cannot forget the rough treatment at Fontainebleau."

The child's demeanour was a vexation to Henri, who, probably conscious that he himself had been to blame, was inclined to lay the responsibility for his son's prolonged resentment on others. But he can have had no more than a divided attention to bestow upon the Dauphin's ill-humour ; and more serious subjects were weighing on his mind. The first tardy step had been taken towards meting out justice to the traitors concerned in the late conspiracy : the Comte d'Auvergne had been captured and was in prison, his fate uncertain. Having remained for some time at a safe distance in his own province of Auvergne, he had ventured to quit his place of refuge on the occasion of some military display, and was at once arrested. The King, observed some one in the Dauphin's presence, knew how to catch his enemies.

" Are my enemies taken ? " asked the boy, identifying himself, notwithstanding recent passages of arms, with his father. " Where are they ? " learning that they were lodged in the Bastille.

D'Entragues was, shortly after, placed in confinement in the Conciergerie, and his daughter, though undergoing no regular imprisonment, was kept under supervision in the faubourg Saint-Germain, carefully guarded.

She was no coward, and met the situation with proud defiance. She did not, she said, fear death; on the contrary, she desired it. But, should the King cause her to die, it would always be said that he had slain his wife. She, rather than Marie, was Queen. Three things she asked of his Majesty: a pardon for her father, a rope for her brother—who, it may be mentioned, had in dastardly fashion sought to throw the blame of his treason on his sister and d'Entragues—and justice for herself. Nor could she be brought to sue for the forgiveness which Henri was only too anxious to bestow. Where offence was none there was no subject-matter for a pardon, she said, and if the King had been told that she desired one it was false. "With which his Majesty was very ill satisfied." When the Comtesse d'Auvergne, on the other hand, threw herself at his feet, imploring his clemency on behalf of her husband, the King, whilst treating her personally with courtesy, and expressing his compassion, explained—taking the Queen's arm as he spoke—that to listen to her entreaties would be equivalent to a declaration that his marriage was void and his son a bastard.

The objects of the conspiracy had been defeated; its promoters were in the King's hands; the present danger had been averted. Domestic peace had also been restored at Saint-Germain. "Le petit valet de papa," as the Dauphin was learning to call himself, was beginning to show self-restraint and to control his temper. Father and son were once more on good terms. When, shortly before the close of the year, the King gave audience to a deputation from the States of Normandy, the boy was at his side, and was presented to them as their future King. He would leave behind him, Henri said, in concluding his speech, a son who would carry out the measures he had set on foot for their benefit.

The Dauphin had listened attentively to what went on.

"*Grand merci, papa*," he said coldly, as he heard the promise given.

CHAPTER VIII

1605

Results of the conspiracy—Rosny and his enemies—Temporary estrangement of the King—Their reconciliation—The Dauphin and Rosny—The Spanish match projected—The Dauphin's love for his father—Visit of Queen Marguerite—The King and Queen on good terms—The Marquise at Saint-Germain.

IN the end the King's clemency again triumphed over the counsels of those who would have made an example of the promoters of the latest attempt to subvert his government. The Marquise and her father escaped chastisement, and the capital penalty was, in Auvergne's case, commuted into an imprisonment lasting over several years. His attempts to shift the blame upon others, and his demeanour at his trial, showed him to be worthy of little compassion.

The conspiracy had, at all events, resulted in the destruction of the notorious promise of marriage which had been so dangerous an engine in the hands of the Queen's enemies; the menace it had contained to her rights and those of the Dauphin was at an end, and, not less important to the domestic peace of the palace, the King had been temporarily emancipated from the control of the Marquise.

If, however, there were those who indulged the hope that, his eyes having been once opened to her true aims and ambitions, the estrangement would prove permanent, they were doomed to disappointment; a note written in February 1605 proving that her delinquencies were already on the way to be, if not forgotten, forgiven. She was to be permitted to see her father—by this time set at liberty—though enjoined to pass no more than a day with him, "for his contagion is dangerous." She was likewise to be allowed to visit her children at Saint-Germain, and a meeting was to be arranged with the King himself. The letter displays the injured man in an attitude which must have caused surprise to those who knew him best.

Such being the case, it was perhaps not unnatural that his friendship with Rosny, who never pandered to what was worst in his master, who never shrank from pointing out his failings, or stooped to flattery, should have undergone a momentary eclipse. There were many who would have rejoiced in the minister's disgrace. The man who controlled the King's expenditure, public and private, who checked his extravagance or his reckless liberality, was certain to be the object of the hostility of every person averse to economical aims and methods, and the ultimate failure of their efforts to detach Henri from the love and trust he had bestowed upon his servant is perhaps a greater title to honour than any other to be found in his record.

Reviewing the position, Rosny saw ranged against him divers classes of the community. There were the great officers of the Crown, jealous of his ascendancy; the Catholics, distrustful of the Huguenot minister, and many of them attached to the Spanish interest; the idlers about Court and palace, conscious of his contempt; the turbulent and seditious, seeking to disturb the tranquillity of the realm; and above all others, those who owed a grudge to the statesman who held the purse-strings.

Straws show which way the wind blows, and the sentiments entertained with regard to Rosny continued to find their reflection in the nursery at Saint-Germain. Almost in babyhood, the Dauphin received his father's friend with coldness, refusing to permit him to kiss his hand. Again, when a letter was brought from the minister, he would have had it thrown out of the window, notwithstanding an accompanying gift of toys. Later, visited by Rosny in person, and enjoined by Madame de Montglat to ask him for money in order that, by giving it away, he might escape the charge of miserliness, he refused.

"It is not his—it is *papa's*," the child answered sulkily.

Incidents of the kind, trivial as they are, indicate the aspect in which the minister was regarded at Saint-Germain, no less than in the King's own environment, where no method was left untried to poison Henri's mind against him.

In the spring of 1605 it seemed that his foes had obtained their wish, and the change in his master's deportment called forth a letter in which he begged to be informed of the King's causes of displeasure. The dryness of Henri's answer cannot have been reassuring.

"I should require more time and leisure than I have at present," he wrote, "were I to reply to the discourses, reasoning, and complaints of your letter of March 13. I will, therefore, permit you to speak of it when next I see you and am at leisure. Meantime, I would advise you to act according to the counsels you offer me when I give way to anger with regard to those who blame my conduct—that is, to let the world say what it pleases without tormenting yourself about the matter, and to act always better and better. Thus you will show the strength of your mind, will make your innocence apparent, and will preserve my good-will, of which you may be as well assured as ever."

Rosny was strong and patient, and may have felt that, confident in his innocence, he could afford to wait. He made no attempt to hasten the promised opportunity of exculpation, though as the weeks went by matters between himself and the King went from bad to worse. Those who looked on may well have believed that the minister's fall was at hand, when Henri said in their hearing that a day might come when he would work more ill to the State than Coligny himself. His enemies were busily at work. Slanders were poured into the King's ears; written libels were placed in his hands. Nor was it until May that an explanation took place. Even then it was not by the minister that it was invited. Intrenched in his silence, he went his way, making no attempt to regain his master's trust, and leaving it to the King to decide when the "leisure" of which he had spoken should give him an opportunity to make his vindication.

Whether his course were dictated by policy or pride, it was wholly successful. Henri, possibly not insensible to the mute rebuke contained in the deportment of the man who had served him so well, and whom he had now, unheard, shut out from his confidence, at last broke the silence ; and when, one day, Rosny was taking leave of him and returning to Paris, he called him back.

"Have you nothing whatever to say to me ?" he asked.

"For the present, nothing," was the answer.

"Well, I have much to say to you," retorted the King. Taking him by the hand, he led him to an alley secure from eaves-droppers, further ensuring secrecy by placing at its entrance a couple of Swiss guards ignorant of the French language. There for no less than four hours the two walked up and down in earnest converse. If the anxious courtiers were debarred from hearing what passed, they could command a view of the alley, and could see that Henri embraced his friend, as he confessed that, remembering twenty-three years of affectionate intercourse, he had found the coldness and reserve of the past weeks intolerable. "For, to speak truth," he said, "if I have not communicated all my fancies to you as I have been accustomed to do, I think you also have concealed many of your own from me." A remedy was to be applied to this state of things, and the malice of Rosny's enemies was to be defeated. The King had decided, so he said, to impart to him all the fine tales he had been told to his discredit ; "for I desire that you and I should come out of this, our hearts clear from any suspicion, and content with one another. . . .

I will open my heart to you, praying that you will conceal from me nothing that is in your own."

Henri kept his word. The falsehoods invented by slanderous tongues were faithfully repeated to the man they concerned ; a libellous document was handed over for his perusal. Reading it carefully from end to end, without change of colour, Rosny made his defence, refuting the charges brought against him one by one, rendering with every word his triumph more complete. Then, his vindication made, he would have tendered his solemn oath of fidelity at his master's feet had not Henri, perceiving at once the interpretation that would be put upon the action by the curious and malevolent spectators who were watching the scene from a distance, been quick to prevent him from assuming an attitude which might be understood as accompanying a prayer for pardon. Expressing his entire conviction of the minister's innocence, he took him by the hand and led him out from the alley, to meet the whole Court awaiting him at its entrance.

Finding, on inquiry, that four hours had elapsed whilst the interview had been carried on, and that it was close upon one o'clock, the King observed, not without malice, that since some persons had doubtless found the time pass more slowly than himself, he would tell them, for their consolation, that he loved Rosny more than ever, and that, between himself and his minister, it was for life and death. With which defiance to the men who would have severed him from his friend, the King dismissed him to his dinner.

Rosny's enemies were for the time defeated. That they continued to indoctrinate the Dauphin with their hostility is shown by a scene taking place at Saint-Germain a month later; when the minister having brought the child a purse full of coins he refused the gift.

"I do not want it," he said ungraciously. "It is not a pretty one; it is ugly. If you give it me I will throw it into the moat," and even when the shining "dauphins" and half-crowns were poured out he refused to be propitiated. "Allez, vilaine," he said, restoring the coins to the purse and flinging it away.

It may be that, on this occasion, those about the boy regretted that he had learnt his lesson so well; it would have been no part of their plan that he should decline any largesse proffered by the Superintendent of Finance. But no rebuke or punishment is recorded as following upon his ill-humour and bad manners.

It is curious that, at a time when the enmity of Spain and its readiness to make common cause with Henri's domestic adversaries had been once again emphatically manifested, the idea of a marriage between the Dauphin and the Infanta continued to be a favourite project at the French Court; and that the King himself, resolute in his opposition to the plan at a later date, is found alluding to the possibility of its being carried into effect.

"I should like you and the Infanta to have a little Dauphin like yourself," he once told his son, playing with the subject.

"Non pas, s'il vous plaît, *papa*," returned the child, lifting his hand in military salute.

Again and again his attendants strove to accustom their charge, thus early, to think of Anne as his future bride, sometimes finding him ready to lend a favourable ear to their suggestions, sometimes encountering opposition. Did he not love Spaniards ? some one asked, demanding his reasons when he answered in the negative.

"Because they are *papa's* enemies," answered the boy. Instinctively he had divined the fact that they were to be regarded with suspicion.

"Spaniards ?" he said, when told that some Spanish nobles were asking to be admitted to his presence. "Spaniards ? Then give me my sword."

Since she was of that nation, he would have none of the Infanta, so he declared. When, however, it was explained that she would make him King of Spain, becoming herself Queen of France, he smiled, and on the occasion of a second visit from the Count de Sora, now on his way back from Spain, he consented to make a gracious response to the greetings he brought.

"Because they are *papa's* enemies." More and more the Dauphin was acquiring the love for his father which had grown so strong before their final parting ; more and more he was learning to submit his childish will to the will of the King. Henri was master ; his wishes were law ; gladly and willingly the boy had begun—in spite of occasional moods of rebellion—to recognise his supremacy. Trifling incidents showed the change. As the children marched to Mass in military array, the Chevalier carrying a blue banner, the Dauphin armed with his arquebus, he bade little Verneuil uncover.

"You must not wear your hat in my presence," he told him. Learning that it was by the King's orders, he was prompt in rescinding his directions.

"Put it on, put it on," he said hurriedly. "Le petit valet de *papa*" was eager to display his loyalty towards the single person he acknowledged to be his superior. Watching the soldiers on parade, he insisted upon tendering, like them, his oath of fidelity to the King, administering it himself to his brothers in their turn.

"*Féfé*," he asked, "do you promise to serve *papa* well?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"And I too," repeated the Dauphin.

During the summer of 1605 a visit was paid to the château by Marguerite de Valois, come thither to make the acquaintance of her successor's son. Far from owing Marie de Medicis any grudge, she was anxious to maintain the rights of a woman in part of her own blood and race. That she was thus friendlily disposed was of the greater importance, as it was currently reported that the Duc de Bouillon—who had never made his submission since Biron's execution, but held aloof, a constant menace to the tranquillity of the country—had conceived the design of obtaining possession of her person, with the object of bringing pressure to induce her to declare, in case of the King's death, that her acquiescence in the divorce had been obtained by force. A statement of this kind would have constituted a real danger to the Dauphin. Marguerite, however, had no intention of playing into the hands of the Huguenots, and her reappearance at Court made her disposition clear.

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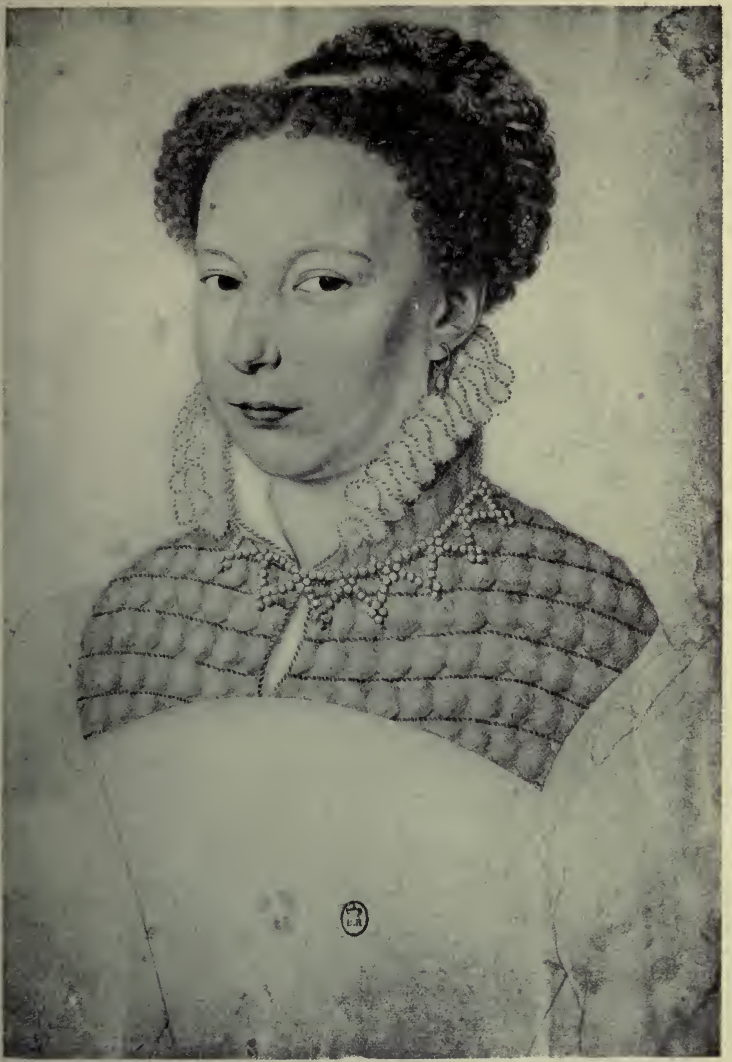

Photo by A. Giraudon, after a drawing by F. Clouet in the Bibliothèque National.

MARGUERITE DE VALOIS, CALLED QUEEN MARGOT.

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She came with the avowed intention of constituting the Dauphin her heir, and was cordially received by his father and the Queen at Monceaux—the estate bestowed by Henri upon his wife at the Dauphin's birth. During the month of July her visit to Saint-Germain was paid, presenting a curious picture of the manners and customs of the times, and in particular of the household of Henri-Quatre.

The approaching event had been naturally a subject of discussion at the château, a question having been raised as to the mode of address to be adopted by the Dauphin towards the woman who had once occupied his mother's place. To the suggestion that he should call her aunt he demurred. Madame, he said, could use that name; he would call her sister.

The discussion was terminated by a message from Marie to the effect that her son was to give Marguerite her own title of *maman*. Two days later the boy is found employing it, on the occasion of a visit from the Queen's *maître d'hôtel*, sent to greet him and to make his mistress's excuses for delaying her visit to Saint-Germain till she had recovered from the fatigue of her journey.

"I humbly thank her," answered the well-drilled child. "I am her servant. How is *maman*?"

By August 6 King and Queen were also at Saint-Germain, awaiting the arrival of the guest; and that afternoon the whole party of children were sent to meet and welcome her. As she drew near, the Dauphin was taken out of his carriage, the Queen descending from her litter. Bareheaded, the boy was lifted up by his body-servant to kiss her, discarding in his greeting the prescribed formula and using a name he had himself devised.

"Welcome to you," he said, "*maman ma fille.*"

"Monsieur," replied the Queen, "I thank you. I have long desired to see you."

Again she kissed him, whilst, pretending to be abashed, he hid his face with his hat.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed. "How handsome you are! You have indeed the royal bearing befitting the sovereignty one day to be yours."

After which, the other children having been duly greeted, the party turned homewards, the Dauphin falling asleep half-way and being carried into the château in that condition.

The visit was a success. Upon her successor's children Marguerite lavished gifts and caresses; with the King and his wife her intercourse was friendly and intimate. "I have my sister, Queen Marguerite, here with me," the King wrote in a letter of this date, "who bears herself after a fashion very pleasing to me."

Perhaps the most singular scene recorded was when one morning the Dauphin, taken to visit his mother in bed, found the King seated upon it, Margot on her knees at the Queen's side; whilst the child, completing the group, was lifted up and sat on the bed playing with a little dog.

That some at least of those less immediately concerned did not view the guest with favour is to be inferred from an incident apparently taking place later on, when the Dauphin had been transferred to the care of his *gouverneur*, M. de Souvré.

"How handsome and well-made he is!" cried Margot, when the boy was brought to visit her by Souvré and his subordinate, Pluvenal. "How happy is the Cheiron who has the bringing up of this Achilles!"

"Did I not tell you," grumbled Pluvenal to his chief, failing to catch the classic allusion, "that this *méchante femme* would insult us?"

Marguerite's visit to Saint-Germain over, she proceeded to Paris, there to take up her residence. It was reported that Henri had proffered two requests: the first that she would refrain from turning day into night, as she had done formerly; secondly, that she would put a restraint upon her excessive liberality and become *ménagère*. To the first admonition she promised obedience, so far as in her lay, confessing that long habit might interpose a difficulty in the way of its observance. As to the other matter she declined to pledge herself. Liberality ran in her blood; nor could she live in any other fashion. Meantime, to the Parisians, who had not had an opportunity of studying her at close quarters for twenty-four years, she was an object of interest and curiosity. Ardent, kindly, clever, unprincipled and impulsive, she would insist upon holding at the font an infant to whom a poor Irishwoman had chanced to give birth at the church doors, inducing the Constable of France, who was at hand, to act the part of her fellow-sponsor. Again, Paris would look on at her passionate grief for the violent death of one of her favourites. Swearing neither to eat nor drink until he should have been avenged, she was present the following day at the execution of the man who had shot him; and left the Hôtel de Sens, where she had lodged, that same night, declaring she would re-enter it no more. The criminal, for his part, died gaily, regretting nothing since his foe was slain; whilst Mesnard, by Margot's command, published, in commemoration of the dead, his "Regrets Amoureux," which were carried about by the Queen and recited evening by evening; the King consoling her with the assurance that as brave and gallant squires as Saint-Julien were still to be found in his Court, and that, should she desire it, more than a dozen should be provided for her.

In September Henri's presence was required in the Limousin, where fresh disturbances were apprehended. The Queen accompanied him, and all went well. The Duc de Bouillon, though retaining an attitude of injured innocence, remained personally at a safe distance; the fortresses against which the expedition was directed being placed by his orders in the hands of the King. The Queen had not been with her husband during the latter part of his absence, but his letters were full of affection. Writing to her, he expressed his joy in the anticipation of a speedy return, and mentioned that every one's spirits were rising as they turned their faces towards "la douce France." In another of the love-letters which he could not refrain from addressing even to his wife, he told her, after giving an account of some passing malady, that in a week he would be holding her in his arms and she should cure him. By November Fontainebleau had been regained; King and Queen arriving, though from different directions, at the same moment, "de quoi ils reçurent grand contentement." A happier chapter of domestic life seemed to be opening for both.

Such intervals in her life of discord may have taught Marie what an existence spent with Henri might, under other circumstances, have been like. When time had softened the memory of her wrongs, and the past was, perhaps, invested with some degree of glamour, she told Richelieu that, their quarrels over for the moment, the King, rejoicing in fair weather, would behave "avec tant de douceur" as to cause her to look back with pleasure upon the time passed with him and upon his kindness. It is not inconceivable that she spoke the truth. To those unacquainted with the King's incredible weakness it may well have appeared that, in spite of the signs of relenting he had shown, the partial rupture with Madame de Verneuil resulting from her complicity in her father's treason must be, in a measure at least, lasting. But these hopes were doomed to disappointment, and at the end of the year those who had indulged them must have augured ill from the fact that she was visiting Saint-Germain, where her daughter had contracted some infectious complaint. The King's orders were that, whilst the other children were kept apart in the new buildings to which they had been removed, the Marquise's son was to be permitted to pass his time with his mother in the old château. The Dauphin, it would appear, did not approve of an arrangement depriving him of his usual playfellow.

"Where have you been?" he demanded of Verneuil on his return.

"*Mon maître*," answered the boy, "I have been to see *maman mignonne*."

"She is yours, not mine," was the contemptuous reply.

A week later the King, come back from the Limousin, paid a visit to the château. Walking with his son in the gardens, old memories woke within him, and he told how, more than five-and-twenty years ago, he had been a prisoner within those walls. The captive now reigned supreme, had triumphed over his enemies, and counted—perhaps—on many years of life. But the end was not far off.

CHAPTER IX

1606

New Year's Day—Rosny becomes Duc de Sully—Expedition against Bouillon—The Dauphin in Paris—Bouillon reduced to submission—Brought to Saint-Germain—The Dauphin's baptism.

WHEN Rosny, followed by three secretaries each bearing a velvet bag, arrived at the Louvre on the morning of New Year's Day, 1606, he found a certain amount of confusion prevailing in the palace. The Queen, who was expecting before long the birth of her third child, had not been well the preceding evening; the King had been occupied in tending her most of the night—also, it would appear, in quarrelling with her—had scarcely slept, and had been consequently late in awaking. Marie, for her part, was either still asleep—which would have been strange, since Henri was apparently receiving many guests in her bed-chamber—or was, as her husband was inclined to believe, shamming slumber.

Rosny was in any case secure of a welcome, for one of his objects in visiting the palace was to deliver over to the King the purses, filled with coinage of varying value, to be distributed amongst the members of the royal household and that of the Dauphin as New Year's gifts.

It might have obviated some discontent at Saint-Germain had Madame de Montglat and her subordinates been aware that their claims had not been overlooked. At the château bits of blue ribbon were all that the little master had to bestow—an expedient invented because the child had seemed ashamed to have nothing to give to those who begged from him, as he went from one to the other with empty hands and saying in jest, though shamefaced, and giving each petitioner a little blow, "*Tenez*, here is your New Year's gift."

At the Louvre, meanwhile, Rosny was exhibiting with pride the provision he had made for the King's liberalities. The device upon the coins was a sprig of laurel, with the motto *Mihi plebis amor*, designed to express the confidence felt by Henri, in spite of conspiracies and treason, in his people's affection. Followed by his laden secretaries, the minister had been readily admitted to the royal chamber, receiving an explanation from the King of his apparent sloth. When the Queen had awakened that morning, he further informed him, it had been with sighs and tears, of which he would tell his friend the reason when fewer persons were present. Then, turning to more cheerful subjects, he entreated, with the eagerness of a boy, to be made acquainted forthwith with the contents of the velvet bags.

Rosny's tone was somewhat apologetic as, responding to his master's demand, he prepared to produce them. When last he had seen the King and Queen together they had been so marvellously gay that, in the anticipation that he would find them in a like humour to-day, he had devised New Year's gifts fitted to move them to laughter in thinking of the pleasure of those upon whom they were to be bestowed. He had also wished that both should be present when they were displayed.

If the Queen was present she gave no sign of taking note of what went on. Henri, however, observed that, though she was pretending to be asleep and had bestowed no greeting upon Rosny, he was sure she was in truth awake. She was angry with himself and the minister—for reasons, he repeated, Rosny should hear later on. Pending indications of wakefulness, the gifts were exhibited, Rosny laying particular stress upon the gratification to be afforded to the maids of honour by the hundred crowns he had allotted to each. The money supplied to them for dress had to be used as was intended. This sum, on the other hand, might be expended, according to their fancy, on *babioles*. Whereupon the King inquired flippantly of the grave minister whether he would not exact kisses in return, and Rosny did his best to chime in with Henri's humour.

Presently, having turned out most of the company, Henri gave the Queen a gentle push.

"Awake, sleeper," he bade her. "Kiss me, and be angry with me no longer. For my part, all my little ill-temper is gone." Did she only know, he added, how freely Rosny told him the truth, she would not charge the latter with flattery.

Marie had no alternative but to resign herself to be wakened. A bad dream, she explained, confirming a report of language used by the King, had disturbed her. He gave people reason to believe that he took more pleasure in the company of others than in her own—persons who were disloyal and hated him in their hearts. And she was ready to hear what Rosny had to say.

It was not difficult to supply the names of the "persons" to whom the Queen made anonymous allusion, and Rosny, between King and Queen, must have felt in a difficulty. Called upon by Henri to speak, and probably well aware of the new points at issue, he hazarded the singular suggestion that he should himself be empowered by both to act on his own authority and without the cognisance of either. If so, he was confident that he would be enabled to make a settlement according to their joint wishes, and conducive to peace and concord.

Henri, after his gay and reckless fashion, would have freely given his friend *carte-blanche*. The Queen, more cautious, and with comprehensible reluctance to pledge herself to unknown paths, demanded time for consideration. Thus the scene ended, and King and Queen were left to complete their tardy toilettes.

Though occasional storms were liable to disturb the tranquillity of the royal household, amicable terms at this time prevailed. The desire felt by Marie de Medicis to promote a good understanding with the house of Austria by means of a double marriage was, however, taking shape, and was destined to prove a fruitful subject of discord. At present the quarrel with Spain was in abeyance, whilst—a more important matter as regarded domestic peace—the Marquise had not yet regained the position she had held before she was implicated in the treasonable designs of the King's enemies.

The pressing necessity of the moment was to take measures to stamp out the remnants of discontent in France. One rebel was still unforgiven, because unrepentant. In spite of Henri's craving to be at peace with all, and especially with his own subjects, the Duc de Bouillon remained, protestations of loyalty and obedience notwithstanding, a centre of disaffection. In the spring of 1606 the King determined to put an end to a state of things which could not be allowed to continue without detriment to his authority, and to proceed in person to effect the reduction of Sedan, Bouillon's place of retreat.

Before starting to bring his recalcitrant vassal to an attitude of submission, he bestowed a well-earned reward upon as faithful a servant as a sovereign ever possessed. Rosny was made duke and peer, the formalities being completed on February 12.

On that day Sully, as he was henceforth to be called, had bidden a great company to dinner at the Arsenal. Returning thither with his guests, he found yet another awaiting him. Henri had arrived to grace the occasion with his presence, explaining that, though uninvited, he had come to the banquet.

"Shall I dine badly?" he asked.

"That may well be, Sire," replied Sully, "since I did not anticipate so great an honour."

"Now I assure you it will not be the case," answered Henri merrily; "for, whilst awaiting you, I have visited your kitchens, where I saw the finest possible fish and *ragoûts* much to my taste. Even, since you tarried too long to please me, I have eaten some of your little oysters and drunk of your wine—the best that ever I drank."

And so the promotion of the minister was gaily celebrated.

On the following day came the discussion of grave affairs of State; and in especial of the projected expedition against Bouillon, and the means provided by Sully to dislodge him from Sedan.

It was March when the arrangements had finally been made, and the King took his departure from Paris. Before he did so the Dauphin was summoned to the capital, for the ostensible purpose of returning thanks to Marguerite of Valois for the inheritance she was to bequeathe him. The King may likewise have desired to introduce his son to the citizens of Paris. The child's entry was publicly made, the Prince de Condé, the Constable of France, and other nobles meeting him at Neuilly; and on the very day of his arrival the King in person commended his heir to the gentlemen of the robe as a charge he left them during his approaching absence.

At the Tuileries the Dauphin had been met by his father and taken to visit the Queen, who had lately given birth to her second daughter, Christine; and on the following day his visit to Queen Margot was paid in the company of the King. Henri's departure had been fixed for two days later, and on the eve of it he received the farewells of Messieurs de la Cour, again charging them with the care of his son. He was going to Sedan, he told them—summing up the situation—his arms open to receive M. de Bouillon, should such be the Duke's will. If not, he went to teach him his duty. Early the next morning came the leave-taking of father and son.

"Adieu, my son," said the King as he kissed the boy. "Pray God for me. Adieu, I give you my blessing."

"Adieu, *papa*," replied the child, "tout étonné et comme interdit de paroles."

If he was awed by the unusual solemnity of the King's manner and words, the impression will have been quickly effaced during the days passed amidst his new surroundings. Visits were to be paid, sights to be seen. Taken, doubtless by the King's orders, to the Arsenal, he was led through the galleries of arms to the ramparts, and thence to the Bastille, where, standing in the courtyard, he was greeted from a tower above by the Comte d'Auvergne.

"Good evening, Monsieur," cried the captive, "I am your very humble servant."

"God keep you, M. le Comte," replied the child, with natural courtesy.

Some months later he showed that, though he might be silent about it, he was not unacquainted with the offence the Count was expiating by his confinement.

"Is the Comte d'Auvergne still in the Bastille?" he asked, proceeding to inquire into the cause of his captivity. It was because he had been very stubborn, some one replied, improving the occasion.

"It was not that," the Dauphin answered briefly. Then, pressed to give the true reason, "It is because he wished to make war on *papa*," he said, after considering the matter.

"But, Monsieur," it was objected, "he is only one man. How could he make war?"

"With fifty thousand men," he answered; nor would he say from whom he had the information.

The Duc de Vendôme, now about fourteen, and the King's constant companion, was to join him; and the letter he carried from the Dauphin has been preserved. He had been a great pleasure to his mother, he informed the King, had made war in her room, and had wakened the enemy there with his drum. He had visited the Arsenal, and would pray God for the King. He was very sleepy, and Féfé Vendôme would tell the rest. Two days later his visit to Paris ended.

The King's campaign was short and successful. He had left Paris on March 15. On April 4 news reached the capital of the surrender of Sedan and the submission of the Duc de Bouillon.

"*Ma cousine*," wrote Henri to the Princess of Orange, "I will say, like Cæsar, *Veni*, *vidi*, *vici*; or like the song, 'Trois jours durèrent mes amours et se finissent en trois jours,' so much was I in love with Sedan." The Princess would judge whether he was better acquainted with the condition of the stronghold than those who had foretold that it would take him three years to reduce it. M. de Bouillon had promised to serve him well and faithfully for the future, and he had promised—he was always ready to do it—to forget the past. To the Queen, who seems to have demurred, he characteristically explained why he could not have acted otherwise. Bouillon was in no condition to resist, so that every one would understand that his pardon was due to clemency alone.

On April 28 the King made his triumphant entry into Paris, accompanied by a train of nobles and princes, and bringing with him the defeated Bouillon, very plainly dressed and sad of countenance.

One other ceremony remained to be performed, when the rebel Duke was brought by Henri to Saint-Germain, to kiss the hand of his heir. Thus the last remnant of disaffection was, if not removed, driven underground.

The King's successes had been joyfully celebrated by the Dauphin and his household. Yet the visit paid by Henri and the Duke was clouded for the child by one of the fits of jealousy to which he was subject. Angered by the attention his father had paid to the Verneuil children, he suddenly retired to his own apartments ; where, seating himself on a coffer, he bade the usher shut the door, and admit no one, "for fear," as he explained, "*papa* may see me weep."

A melancholy little figure, withdrawn from the merry-making, he had learnt that Henri-Quatre, his own emotional character notwithstanding, had no liking for tears. In spite of the strong affection uniting father and son, there was scant resemblance between the child of Marie de Medicis and the gay, brilliant, passionate Gascon. Never, says Héroard, was child more like father. One sees what one desires to see ; but with some superficial similarity in tastes —a love of outdoor pursuits and of soldiering—there was little in Louis XIII. to recall the great Henri. Brown-eyed, dark-haired, with the heaviness of feature inherited from his mother's race, he might, as Michelet observes, have been rather taken for a

Spaniard or an Orsini, a prince of the Italian decadence, his unlikeness to his father giving rise in some quarters to an unfounded doubt whether he was in truth his son.

In childhood there was apparent in him at times a certain unsocial instinct totally at variance with Henri's habits, and foreshadowing the moods of melancholy to which he was subject later on. One evening this summer, when he had been dancing for the entertainment of King and Queen, he suddenly climbed on to his nurse's knee, seemed to fall asleep, and was put to bed. After the company had withdrawn, *maman* Doundoun, watching him, perceived that he was awake.

"Monsieur," she said, charging him with the deception, "you are not asleep."

"No," admitted the child, very low. "Is *papa* gone?"

"Yes, Monsieur. Why did you pretend to be asleep?"

"Because *papa* would not have gone away," was the reply, "and there were so many people, and I was hot."

In that same month of June an event took place, attended by no serious consequences at the time, yet not without its effect upon the royal household. In returning to Paris after a visit to Saint-Germain, the King and Queen had a narrow escape from drowning. The road was slippery; at Neuilly the horses lost their footing, and the royal coach and its occupants were precipitated into the water.

The King had been lying at full length, asleep; César de Vendôme, the Princesse de Conti, and others were

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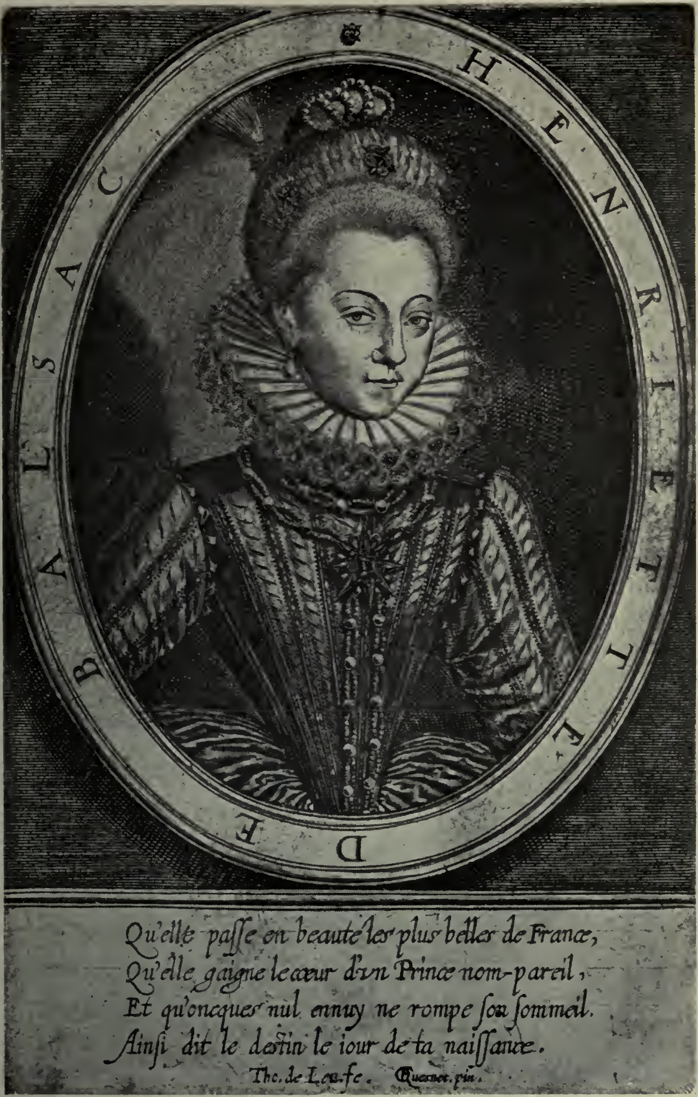
HENRIETTE DE BALSAC
Qu'elle paſſe en beauté les plus belles de France,
Qu'elle gaigne le cœur d'vn Prince nom-pareil,
Et qu'oncques nul ennuy ne rompe ſon ſommeil.
Ainſi dit le deſtin le iour de ta naiſſance.
Tho. de Leu. fe.
Quesnet. pin.

From an engraving by Tho de Leu, after a painting by F. Quesnel.

HENRIETTE D'ENTRAGUES.

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there, and for a moment the danger was not small. The King was seized by an attendant, who contrived to draw him out of the water, Henri himself saved his son, whilst a servant caught the Queen by her headdress, and, with the King's help, placed her in safety, the Princesse de Conti being the last to reach dry land. The most serious result of the misadventure was the use made of it by the Marquise de Verneuil, who, under cover of congratulations upon the King's escape, contrived to renew relations with him, and drew him once more into her nets. Secure in her power, she visited him in order to express her rejoicing, and did not fail to turn the incident to good account by pointing out how deplorable would have been her condition should she and her children have been left by his death in the hands of the Queen. Eager to forgive, Henri fell into the snare, forgot his just causes of resentment, again sought to induce his wife to admit the Marquise to Court, and the old condition of domestic conflict was renewed.

At every point, in every direction, the influence of the clever, unscrupulous, quick-witted Frenchwoman was working against the Queen, unequipped by nature to contend against her. Even those upon whose support Marie might have chiefly reckoned were liable to succumb to Madame de Verneuil's wiles. Amongst them was a kinsman of her own, Don Giovanni de Medicis, illegitimate brother of her uncle, the Grand-duke, whose presence in Paris, hailed at first with satisfaction by his niece, was to prove in the sequel a source rather of trouble than of rejoicing. On his arrival in July the Queen had been anxious to do him honour; whilst his brilliant record as a soldier—although his laurels had been won in the service of Spain—commended him to the King's favour. By both he was made cordially welcome, an ample income was assigned him; and hopes were held out of high office in France.

The position he took up at first with regard to the royal household was a prudent one. Upon receiving some hazardous confidence from Henri, he showed with blunt straightforwardness, real or assumed, that he had penetrated the object with which it was made, and let the King know that he was not disposed to carry it out.

"If your Majesty," he said, "tells me this in order that I should repeat it to the Queen, you deceive yourself, as would also be the case should the Queen command me to give a like message to your Majesty. . . . I am here to serve you. I will do so gladly, and will give my life and blood for your Majesty, your children, and your State." As an intermediary he declined to act.

Had Don Giovanni's career at court corresponded to this fair beginning, he might have played a useful part there. Unfortunately, he was to fall under Madame de Verneuil's influence; nor was it long before Marie demanded that he should be recalled to Florence.

The day was approaching when the ceremonies omitted from the private baptism of the Dauphin, *ondoyé* at birth, were to be performed, and the boy was at length to be given a name. He would himself have liked to be called after his father; but it had been determined that he should bear the name of the old Kings of France. The rite was to have taken place in Paris, and to have been the occasion of public festivities; the presence of the plague in the capital, however, necessitated a change of plans, and Fontainebleau was selected as the scene of the solemnity.

Those in charge of the Dauphin at Saint-Germain did their best to impress him with a sense of the importance of the function in which he was to be the central figure, and with the necessity that he should conduct himself with propriety. He must be very good, some one told him, lest another Dauphin instead of himself should be presented for baptism. The admonition roused him rather to a spirit of revolt than of submission.

"I should not care," he replied perversely; "I should be very glad of it. I should then go where I pleased, and no one would follow me."

On September 9 the journey to Fontainebleau was begun, and on the 14th, dressed in white, the Dauphin was presented at the font by the Cardinal de Joyeuse, representing Pope Paul V., and his mother's sister, the Duchess of Mantua. The ceremony took place in the keep of the castle, in the presence of a multitude who repaired thither to witness it, and who vied with each other in doing honour to the occasion by the magnificence of their apparel. The Queen was said to have worn thirty-two thousand pearls and three thousand diamonds; and Bassompierre, at the moment possessed of no more than seven hundred crowns, ordered a dress which was to cost fourteen thousand, defraying the cost of it afterwards at the gaming-table.

Notwithstanding his recalcitrance beforehand, the boy's behaviour left nothing to be desired, as he made the due responses to the questions addressed to him. His two little sisters, sharing in the ceremony, received the names of Elizabeth and Christine, and the day closed with a banquet and a ball.

The visit to Fontainebleau passed off without the friction by which the former one had been marked. A change had come over the boy. If he feared his father, he also loved him with a child's passionate affection, jealous of any attempt he so much as suspected to infringe, in his own interest, upon the authority and pre-eminence of the King. Tenacious of his rights where others were concerned, he was eager to disavow them when they might be supposed to compete with those of his father.

"*Hé*, that belongs to *papa*," he protested, when at a Twelfth Night celebration the title of King was to be given him; nor would he consent to assume it until the matter had been duly explained. All, in fact, belonged to his father, nothing to himself.

"*Mon maître*," asked little Verneuil as the two were playing at making card castles, "does this house"—they were still at Fontainebleau—"belong to you?"

"No," answered the child. "I have none It belongs to *papa*."

"I have one, I," returned Verneuil, bragging.

"What is it?" asked the Dauphin.

"Verneuil," was the reply.

"You are a liar," retorted Louis angrily; "it does not belong to you, it belongs to your *maman*."

It was always the same.

"I have been playing away all your property, my son," the King told him with a kiss, when he had lost money at the gaming-table.

"Excuse me, *papa*," he answered. "It is not mine, it is yours."

As if oppressed by a presentiment of the tragedy by which he was so early to be placed in possession of his inheritance, he could not bear to be told by flatterers of the day when he would fill the King's place.

"Let us not speak of that," he said shortly, when reminded of his future sovereignty. The King's enemies were his enemies; and when the Chaplain was instructing him upon the commandments, the injunction not to kill gave him pause.

"Not Spaniards?" he objected. "Ho, ho, I shall kill Spaniards, who are *papa's* enemies. I shall turn them well into dust."

"Monsieur," replied the Chaplain in rebuke; "Spaniards must not be killed. They are Christians."

"But they are *papa's* enemies," persisted the boy.

"They are nevertheless Christians," repeated the priest, not improbably belonging to the Spanish faction. Louis gave in.

"I will then go and kill Turks," he said regretfully.

In his estimate of Spain, the child's instinct was a true one. Hostility might be, for the moment, quiescent; it was no more. From this year 1606—the year marked by Henri's triumph over the remains of open opposition in France—Michelet dates the development of the plot he believes to have resulted in the King's murder. Whatever the truth as to the actual end may be, it is undeniable that he stood in a sense alone, a single figure barring the way to the universal dominion aimed at by Spain. And upon the side of his enemies were secretly ranged many who should have been his defenders. His foes were too often those of his own household; and the thought of their intrigues and of his hurrying doom lends pathos to the side-scenes of these last years.

CHAPTER X

1607

Quarrels between King and Queen—Sully and his enemies—His relations with Henri—And with the Queen—The Duke as mediator.

FOR part at least of the dangers gathering around him Henri himself was responsible. From the time when, with eyes that must have been opened to the perfidy of the Marquise, he was recaptured by her, the Queen was his enemy. She and her children on one side, a faithless husband and an insolent rival on the other—such was the position; and she can scarcely be considered blameworthy if she attempted to meet intrigue by intrigue, endeavouring by every means in her power to defeat the machinations of her foe, and falling increasingly under the influence of the Italian favourites who could be trusted to support her cause.

In June 1606 the accident had occurred which furnished the opportunity for a renewal of intercourse between the King and Madame de Verneuil. A series of letters belonging to the October of that year show him entirely under the old yoke. The prudent policy of the Marquise, who, playing a cautious game, was again alleging conscientious scruples as a reason for keeping Henri at a distance, had succeeded, and her sway over him was once more established.

Outwardly there may have been little change in the aspect of the Court. The undercurrents of jealousy and hatred, the dreams of a possible vengeance, were covered by the conventional courtesies of common life; the combination of jest and grim earnest, the heartburnings under the laughter, giving its distinctive character to this period, when the final scene was already in preparation. At times, indeed, glimpses are to be caught of what seem like amicable relations between King and Queen; and Marie appears, in spite of what is sometimes stated to the contrary, to have been strangely tolerant of the children brought up with her own. "Our daughter," wrote Henri to Madame de Verneuil of the three-year-old Gabrielle, "entertained my wife and myself and all the company for three hours this evening, and nearly made us die of laughing. Maître Guillaume"—his fool—"is nothing to her."

But Marie's letters to her uncle show the bitterness and the indignation working within.

The special matters upon which King and Queen were at issue—the infidelity of a servant of Marie's, his imprisonment at her request by the Grand-duke, the efforts and counter-efforts made for or against him—these are of little interest. The attitude, however, of the Queen during the following years is of importance, considered in conjunction with the catastrophe, and the suspicions entertained in some quarters that she connived at it.

Finally separated from his wife, so far, that is, as any remnant or possibility of genuine affection was concerned, with the Court divided into parties, and unable to count with certainty upon the fidelity of most of the principal princes or nobles, one element of good fortune remained to Henri, in the possession of a friend as uncompromising in his views, as strong, as faithful, and as devoted as Sully. In his wife's animosity Henri reaped the just reward of his conduct towards her. In the loyal affection of the minister he also received his deserts. For, failing in his duty towards the woman he had married, he was worthy, as a friend, of all love and honour.

If the discomfiture of Sully's foes had been complete, their hatred for the man who had triumphed over them was not thereby lessened, and his control over the King's expenditure could not fail to continue an ever-present source of irritation. Neither did he lay himself out either to win popularity or to cause what was stigmatised as niggardliness to be condoned by reason of any graciousness in his manner of practising it. Rough to discourtesy, he disdained the arts of conciliation. Moreover, the fact that, whilst serving the King with zeal and integrity, he had not been neglectful of his personal interests or omitted to build up his private fortune, did not tend to diminish the dislike felt for him.

Nor had his enemies lost hope of final success. Again and again, as they saw their master roused to anger by the plain speech of the one man who dared to oppose his wishes, and to tell him unpalatable truths, fresh expectations were raised in the minds of the courtiers surrounding him that, notwithstanding past disappointment, the fall of the minister was at hand; but, though impatient of Sully's reprimands, veiled in the language of a courtier, Henri ever overcame his momentary resentment, and remained true to his old love and trust.

One scene out of many may serve to give a picture of the singular relationship established between the two. On this occasion master and servant had strongly disagreed on the subject of some project upon which the King was bent; and, moved to hot indignation, Henri had parted from his monitor in anger; observing, as he left the chamber where the discussion had taken place, in a voice plainly audible to the courtiers awaiting him outside, that he would no longer bear with the Duke's behaviour—that he did nothing but contradict him and think ill of all he wished to do, adding that he would not see him again for a fortnight.

The access of passion on the King's part was eagerly noted by those whose hopes would have been crowned had a permanent breach ensued. Was it possible that at length Sully had gone too far, and that the efforts to compass his ruin, hitherto futile, were to prove successful? It is easy to imagine the excitement produced at Court; but a surprise awaited the expectant courtiers.

Early the next morning the King had risen. By seven o'clock he was again at the Arsenal, going unannounced to knock at the door of the Duke's own chamber. When it was opened Sully was discovered already seated at a great table covered with papers. The King proceeded to make inquiries as to his occupation.

"What were you doing?" he asked.

Sully's answer was ready. He had been engaged in writing letters, and making memoranda concerning matters connected with the royal service, together with an agenda of all the business to be transacted that day, by himself or by his secretaries.

"Since when have you been thus occupied?" was Henri's next question.

"Since three o'clock this morning," replied the minister.

Henri turned to one of the men by whom he had been accompanied.

"Well, Roquelaure," he asked, "what would you take to lead a like life?"

Roquelaure confessed that not the contents of the royal treasury would suffice to bribe him, and was, with the rest of Henri's attendants, dismissed; the King remaining to discuss matters of business with the Duke. Their nature is unrecorded. It is not impossible that, hoping by kindness to win Sully's consent to the projects he had at heart, Henri had renewed the conversation which had ended so ill upon the preceding day; for when the minister replied he observed coldly that his Majesty having examined into the facts, made up his mind, and his judgment being superior to that of any of his subjects, nothing more remained to be said. Obedience must be rendered to his orders, together with approval of all that was to be done, without reply or remonstrance, since by these last the King was displeased.

The transparent humility and perfunctory tribute to his superior wisdom were in no wise gratifying to a man who rated them, as no doubt Sully intended him to do, at their true value. Tapping the Duke upon the cheek, Henri displayed a thorough comprehension of the meaning of his unwonted subservience.

"Oho," he said, "you are still angry at what occurred yesterday. Now I am no longer angry. Embrace me, and treat me with as much freedom as usual. If you acted otherwise, it would be a sign that you had ceased to take thought for my affairs ; and even if it makes me angry at times, I desire that you will continue, for I do not love you the less. Did you cease to contradict me, I should believe you bore me no more affection."

The master deserved the servant, the servant the master, and, in spite of what was afterwards alleged in some quarters, it can hardly be doubted that Henri was true to the minister to the end. Sully's office however was no sinecure. Not only was he overwhelmed with public business, but in the disputes becoming daily more embittered between the King and his wife he was frequently called upon to act the ungracious part of mediator, not without risk of incurring the resentment of both belligerents. Talking the matter over at a later date with Mézeray, Sully told him that he had never known a week pass without a quarrel, and that the Queen's passion on one occasion reached such a height that, afraid that she would strike the King, he himself had forced down—with less respect than he could have wished—the hand she had lifted ; adding that, though Marie had charged him with having given her a blow, she had afterwards acknowledged that he had done right.

It appears that, no less than Henri, she testified a fitful desire to avail herself of the Duke's advice as

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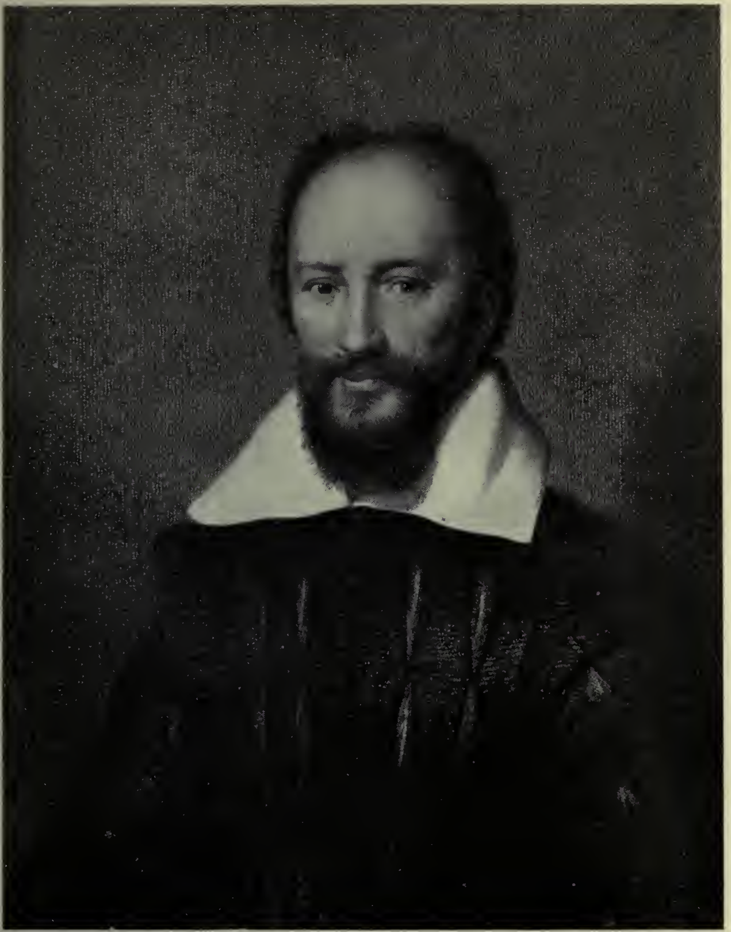

From an engraving by W. Holl.

MAXIMILIEN DE BETHUNE,
Duc de Sully.

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to her dealings with her husband ; and that she would consult him upon the most private questions is shown by a curious incident related by Richelieu, who had learnt it from Sully himself.

On this occasion she took counsel with the Duke as to whether it would be well to act upon a suggestion hazarded by Concini, and inform Henri that certain persons attached to the Court had made love to her. The favourite had been present when she broached the subject, and so long as he assisted at the conference Sully declined to give an opinion. The affair, he said roughly, was of a nature so different from those of which he had the care that he was incapable of tendering any advice upon it. When the Italian had withdrawn, however, he adopted another tone, warning the Queen strongly against the proposed step, as being one calculated to rouse the King's suspicions. Every one knew, he told her bluntly, that a man did not make love to a woman of her rank without having first made sure that she would not dislike it, and unless she had come half-way to meet him. The King might either imagine she had acquainted him with the matter lest he should learn it elsewhere ; or that she had tired of the men she accused because others had been found more to her liking. Marie was convinced by the Duke's reasoning and remained silent.

Early in the year 1607 the domestic contest had reached a crisis. The King, in anger, had left the palace without taking leave of his wife. Before quitting Paris for Chantilly, he visited Sully at the Arsenal, told him what had occurred, and presumably invited the intervention of the minister, as that afternoon the Duke repaired to the Louvre to seek an interview with the Queen.

He found her shut up in her chamber. Leonora Concini, who was seated outside it, asleep, her head leaning on her elbow, informed the visitor, when he roused her, that she had been unable to gain access to her mistress's presence. Sully was more successful. Admitted to Marie's apartment, she proved to be engaged in inditing a letter to her husband, in no wise adapted to further the cause of peace. In deference to his remonstrances, she consented that the Duke should draw up an epistle containing her sentiments couched in less offensive language, to be then sent to the King as her own. When this had been done Sully, with an approving conscience, withdrew, congratulating himself upon the dispatch of a missive with which it would have been difficult to find fault.

Yet the matter of it, whatever might be the form, was not calculated to commend itself to the King. Well worded and dignified, it contained a protest against the King's subjection to a woman constituting a danger, not only to the Queen and to her children, but to the tranquillity of the State, which was dependent upon the legitimacy of the royal children, called in question by the Marquise and her adherents. Should Marie, by no other means, be enabled to induce the King to change his present line of conduct, she warned him of her intention, as a last resource, of bringing his son and daughters to fling themselves, with their mother, at his feet in the attempt to make their supplications heard. Were Henri to listen to their prayer, the Queen added a solemn undertaking that she would abandon, for her part, any idea of vengeance ; would never work, or permit to be worked, any evil to her rival or her children, and would endeavour to please the King in every respect.

Such was the letter, summarised, sent to Henri at Chantilly. That Marie's complaint should have been, however reluctantly, endorsed by Sully testifies to the presence of a danger, if a shadowy one, still existing with regard to the rights of the royal children. It could, under these circumstances, be no matter of surprise that the Queen should protest ; that her remonstrance had been couched in terms of respect was something gained ; and Sully retired content with his afternoon's work. It had apparently not occurred to him that the wording of the communication would be likely to betray, to so acute an observer as Henri, that it was not the unassisted handiwork of his Italian wife. He was not long left in ignorance of the King's opinion of it.

"My friend," wrote Henri, "I have received the most impertinent letter possible from my wife. But I am less offended with her than with the man who dictated it ; for I see very well that it is not written in her own style. Therefore make inquiries and try to discover who is its author, for never again will I see him or love him."

On the receipt of this missive the Duke, as he himself observes, was a little startled and troubled. When the King returned to Paris he lost no time in visiting the Arsenal, demanding whether Sully had yet gained the information he desired.

"I have no certainty on the subject as yet," returned the minister. "In two days, however, I hope to give you a good account of it, and, did I know what were the contents of the letter, and your cause of offence, I should do so the sooner."

In reply Henri admitted that the letter was well written, full of good sense, humility, and submission, "mais qui me mord en riant, et me pique en me flattant." Taking it piece by piece, he could find nothing to object to; but as a whole it angered him. It had, he was sure, been written maliciously and with the intention of causing him annoyance. Had his wife taken counsel with Sully himself, or another of his faithful servants, he would have been less offended. It would at all events have been done—as Sully had cautiously suggested—with a good intention.

Thus encouraged, the Duke made frank confession. He was the culprit by whom the letter had been composed, lest worse should have befallen. A prudent man, he had retained in his possession the original draft, and it was found, on comparing it with that received by the King, that Marie de Medicis, in copying it, had made certain alterations, rendering it less conciliatory and more calculated to produce irritation on the King's part. Henri had no desire to quarrel with Sully, and allowed himself to be pacified.

Sully was not to escape altogether the consequences of the incident. Since he was on the excellent terms it represented with the Queen, Henri desired to make further use of his services. He had been informed that on two occasions, when he himself had been absent on a hunting expedition, Marie had secretly visited the

Arsenal, had been shut up for more than an hour at a time with the minister in his wife's private apartment, issuing from the interview flushed and tearful, but in a manifestly friendly mood. As to the channel through which these facts had been made known to him—in case Sully might be inclined to dispute them—the King named as his informant the Duke's own daughter, the young Duchesse de Rohan, who had thought to gratify the King thereby. Sully was on no account to let the Duchess know that Henri had spoken of the affair, " for I should then no longer take the great pleasure I do in coming here, and she would tell me nothing more, did she know that I should repeat it to you. For I laugh and play with her as a child—though I do not find her like a child in intelligence, since she sometimes gives me very good advice, and is, besides, to be trusted to keep counsel; for I have confided several things to her, of which I have noticed that she has made no mention to you or to others."

What Sully thought of his domestic reporter is not recorded, any more than whether he yielded obedience to the King in concealing from the young Duchess his cognisance of her having acted in that capacity. He may, however, have regretted her communications; since upon the strength of them he was now directed by Henri to use the influence he had acquired in the interests of peace.

In order to pave the way for a reconciliation with the Queen, Sully was first to approach Madame de Verneuil, in no wise as the King's representative or envoy, but as if acting on his own initiative, and to warn her—in the character of an anxious friend—that, did she not amend her ways, she was incurring the risk of forfeiting the King's favour, in which case he had reason to know that she would be deprived of her children and immured in a cloister. He was further to recount the principal delinquencies with which she stood charged—namely, that she spoke of the King himself with contempt, sought the countenance and support of the house of Lorraine, and maintained a friendly intercourse with the traitors, her father and her brother, in spite of orders from the King to the contrary. Above all, she alluded to the Queen in improper terms, placed her son and daughter on a footing of equality with the royal children, and continued to allege, as her justification, the old promise of marriage declared null and void by the Parlement. These just causes of indignation to the Queen, giving rise as they did to constant quarrels, would no longer be tolerated by the King, and would drive him to transfer his affections elsewhere.

A promise of amendment having been obtained from the Marquise, Sully was to proceed to the second portion of his task. Once again as of his own accord, he was to repair to the Queen, armed with her rival's submission; to show her that conformity to the King's will was the best means of securing satisfaction to herself; in especial to represent the extreme objections entertained by her husband to the absolute domination exercised over her by the Concini—so embittering to the King's spirit that his other causes of complaint against her were thereby magnified; and to endeavour, by all the means in his power, to induce her to dismiss her Italian favourites. Should Sully succeed in this double enterprise, and gain the victory over the two women, Henri protested that he would attach a greater value to the service than if he had captured, with all his cannon, the town and castle of Milan.

The unfortunate minister may well have felt that the last would have been the easier feat. Making fitting acknowledgment of the honour conferred by the tokens of his master's trust and confidence, he added that, should success attend his efforts, it would be by the favour of Heaven, rather than owing to his own wisdom and efforts; adding that, in his opinion, a simpler method would be best—that the exercise of the royal authority—a *je le veux* from the King's own lips—would be a more certain means of obtaining what he desired. That means Henri could not be persuaded to take, and in the end little amelioration was effected in the condition of affairs.

CHAPTER XI

1608

Henri's affection for his children—The Dauphin's training—Birth of the Duc d'Orléans—Marie de Medicis' complaints—Sully at Fontainebleau—The Turkish Ambassador and the Dauphin—Madame's rebuke.

WHEN the Queen, in the letter which had given her husband so much offence, had dwelt upon the endangered condition of her "poor children," adding the menace that, in case of necessity, they should be brought to add their entreaties to her own, and should seek, at their father's feet, the justice denied to herself, she displayed a comprehension of the arguments most likely to appeal to the man she addressed. If there were lucid intervals when Henri became dimly aware that Marie de Medicis had reason and right upon her side, his apprehension of her grievances had the coldness of an unloving husband. In the case of his children it was a different matter, and it was by pleading in their name that her best hope of success lay. The one meeting-point of husband and wife was supplied by the royal nursery. In the presence of the little group who inhabited it, it almost seemed that a truce was proclaimed, and a more harmonious atmosphere replaced the discordant and disintegrating elements at work elsewhere. Quick-

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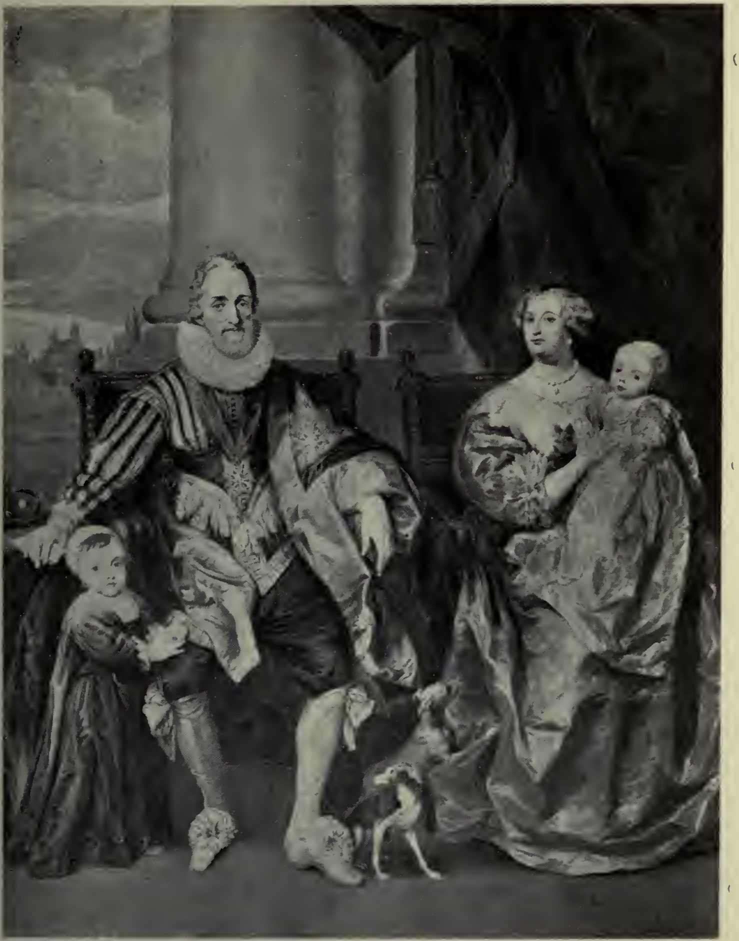

From an engraving, after the painting by Van Dyck.

HENRI IV. AND HIS FAMILY.

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witted as the Dauphin was, there was no sign that he had been allowed to discover that his father and mother were not at one, and the child loved them both. If the King's figure naturally loomed largest in his eyes, he was also manifestly fond of his mother. Both were his "good friends." "May God," he prayed, "give good life to my father, my good friend, and to my mother, my good friend." Would *maman*, he asked, not write to him? "*Papa* has told me," he added, "that she makes a multitude of blots; but, were she to write to me, I would take good care of the letter, blotted though it might be."

The boy was in his sixth year, and growing to be of an age when the training he received was of increasing importance. To bring up a child well whose sense of his importance was necessarily brought home to him daily would, in any case, have been no easy task and in Madame de Montglat an unfortunate choice of a *gouvernante* had been made. Incapable of inspiring respect, she relied upon the use of the rod to enforce discipline.

In this it must be admitted that she and the King were in full accord. "I must complain of you," he once wrote—most unjustly, as Héroard's journal proves—"that I have not heard from you that you have whipped my son. For it is my will, and I command that he shall be whipped every time that he is stubborn or in any way ill-behaved; being well aware personally that nothing in the world is so profitable, as I know by experience, for at his age I was much whipped. Therefore, I desire you to do it, and to make him understand."

The admonition was unnecessary. The poor little Dauphin was "made to understand" thoroughly well, the treatment he received at the hand of the *gouvernante* presenting a striking contrast to the deference shown by those who came to pay their respects to the heir to the throne.

Whilst Queen and King were quarrelling at Paris, the children were staying at Fontainebleau, where on March 1 the boy, in an edifying mood, announced his intention of retiring into a corner to say his Paternoster whensoever he should be inclined to be wilful, so that the wicked angel might be put to flight. It had been a fleeting fit of virtue. On the very next morning Héroard, entering his charge's bedchamber, found him undergoing corporal punishment at the hands of Madame de Montglat, "who was in a passion with him," said the doctor, adding significantly, "and sorry that I had found the door open." A few hours later all had been rearranged with a view to effect, and the delinquent, as if he had never been acquainted with the whip, was receiving, in royal fashion, an envoy from the Elector Palatine, who was the bearer of a letter from his master containing his proffers of service and expressing the hope that the writer might merit the honour of the Dauphin's favour.

By the end of March peace had outwardly been restored to the royal household, and King and Queen had returned to Fontainebleau, where Easter was to be kept by a gay company and the birth of yet another child was expected.

Of Easter observances not the least important was the customary ceremony of Maundy Thursday, when the King in person was wont to wash the feet of thirteen poor men. On this occasion, incapacitated by sickness—it has been observed that this was curiously often the case—Henri desired that his son should represent him; but a serious difficulty occurred. Conceiving a pronounced dislike for the task, Louis at first replied by a flat refusal ; although, when his father personally explained his wishes, he was induced to promise unwillingly to carry them out. Moreover, when the moment arrived for his obedience to be put to the proof, repulsion again gained the day. Conducted to the ballroom, which was to be the scene of the function, attended by the Princes of the Blood, and compelled to ascend the platform where the expectant poor were seated, his indignation was further roused when he became aware that his own basin had been brought into requisition ; and, drawing back, with tears, he obstinately refused to perform the office required of him, the chaplain being ultimately forced to take it upon himself. It may be that Henri was not without a certain sympathy for his son's recalcitrance, for no mention is made of the use of the rod on this occasion. The Dauphin, for his part, when asked why he had objected to do what was done by the King himself, replied by pointing out composedly that he was not King, and leaving it to be inferred that duties should be accompanied by compensations.

On Easter Monday, April 16, the King's second son was born—a little figure who, notwithstanding a horoscope predicting for him a great future, did no more than pass across the stage, disappearing from it before the completion of his fifth year. "The King," wrote the court poet, Malherbe, "was extraordinarily rejoiced at the birth, the more so, perhaps, by reason of the child's extreme likeness to himself."

It had been at first Henri's intention that the infant should bear the simple title of Monsieur, belonging to the brother next in age to the Dauphin; a certain income being assigned to him, to be increased should he serve his brother loyally. But the people, by common consent, had decided otherwise, and the name of Duc d'Orléans was so promptly and generally bestowed upon the new-comer that the King bowed to the popular will, and endorsed it by conferring the title upon him.

Princes of the Blood, princesses and nobles, had gathered together as usual for the event, or visited the palace in order to pay their respects to the newborn infant; and a curious light, in the form of a luminous bird, observed by the soldiers on guard at night, was accepted by Henri as a good omen for the enterprises he had in view. He had often, he said, noticed similar phenomena on the eve of battles and sieges, and they had ever been the heralds of good fortune.

Outwardly all seemed to promise well for the prosperity of the royal house. But Marie de Medicis was brooding over her wrongs, and casting about for a means of safe-guarding herself and her four children from their foes.

Her correspondence with the Grand-duke shows that, even at this moment, the King had brought pressure upon her to send a request to her uncle that he would release the man who, as her enemy, he still detained in captivity. In appearance Marie yielded; the letter dictated by her husband was written. But in anticipation of a like occasion, when she might not be acting as a free agent, Marie had taken her measures beforehand. A second letter, early in June, explained that the first had been sent by constraint, and expressed her hope that by the absence of a private countersign agreed upon between uncle and niece the Grand-duke would have understood that the demand it contained did not proceed from her. She also gave vent to her dissatisfaction with Don Giovanni; who, as her kinsman, should have contributed to her peace of mind, and had on the contrary worked her more ill than all her enemies.

"I have no other passion, no other care," she added, "than is concerned with the Marquise, and whoever declares himself on her side declares himself my enemy. Where I can, at any hour and at any time, I will severely avenge myself. Let your Highness come, in any way possible, to my assistance. Consider that to none other but yourself can I have recourse. With tears in my eyes I commend myself to you in all my present sorrows. . . ." And a trembling postscript tells that the letter was written at three different times and in secret, in consequence of the King's prohibition.

Such was the bitter complaint of the mother of Henri's four children, and the condition to which she had been reduced by a man as kind-hearted and as reluctant to give pain as Henri.

Whilst courtiers regarded the state of the royal household with curiosity or indifference, Sully, visiting Fontainebleau the day after the Duc d'Orléans' birth, must have looked at the matter with sadder eyes, despairing of the restoration of the domestic peace he had laboured to promote.

He appears, during his visit, to have made an attempt to propitiate the good opinion of his master's son. Again there is visible in the child's demeanour the reflection of the animosity felt for the minister by those around him.

"Do you want anything?" the Duke inquired kindly. "Ask me for it."

The boy must have known well that there were those at hand ready, on so fair an opportunity, to prompt him with petitions. Yet, after a moment, he replied in the negative.

"Nothing," he said, in cold response to the friendly invitation.

"I have asked him so often," he said afterwards, when chidden by *maman* Doundoun, his nurse, for not having proffered some request on her behalf, "and he does nothing."

It was probably an excuse. Louis had a distaste, often apparent, for making demands or asking favours; and when induced, a day or two later, to beg that the nurse's desire should be gratified, it was only by constraint. Listening to Madame de Montglat's solicitations on behalf of others of his household, his indifference was manifested so plainly that the Duke noticed it.

"Monsieur cares nothing about it," he said, observing him.

"Si fait," said Louis, waking up to the consciousness that he was damaging the chances of his servants; but Sully had noted his attitude, and was at no loss to explain his ungraciousness.

More especially under present circumstances it was the Queen's policy to cause her son to take his place publicly as heir to the throne, and before the party at Fontainebleau dispersed and the children returned to Saint-Germain the Dauphin received in audience the Turkish Ambassador, treating his guest with distant courtesy, and accepting the gifts he brought with coldness. Saying by his interpreter that the poor, unable to make great gifts, offered their affection, the envoy kissed the child's hand, praying that he might preserve the amity existing between his father and Turkey. The conversation that evening was not adapted to pave the way for the fulfilment of these hopes.

"Monsieur," said his doctor, "you must one day go to Constantinople with five hundred thousand men."

"Yes," answered the Dauphin with alacrity, "I will kill all the Turks, and this one as well."

Héroard demurred. Having taken the trouble to visit him and bring him gifts, the Ambassador, in his opinion, should be spared in the general slaughter. The boy was unconvinced.

"The Turks do not believe in God," he asserted doggedly; and, though it was explained to him that this was too sweeping a statement, he refused to relent.

"I will kill them all," he reiterated; "but I will have Mass said before this one, and will have him afterwards baptized."

Another guest at Fontainebleau was Guise, whose visit was the occasion of an object-lesson on the danger of speaking too freely before a child who listened to all that went on around him. Finding the Dauphin playing with a toy monkey, the King had unwisely hazarded the remark that it bore a resemblance to the Duc de Guise. Shortly after Guise himself, paying his respects to his master's son, made some inquiry as to the puppet.

"It is your likeness," answered Louis, whether in malice or innocence.

"How do you know that ?" asked the Duke.

"*Papa* said so," was the conclusive reply.

His ideas upon religion were clear, and he had been instructed with care, showing a keen interest in what he was taught. He would point out in chapel the prayers he wished his little sister to say, and listened eagerly to Bible stories.

"I will learn them and relate them to *papa*," he said proudly. "My sister will tell stories of the wasp who stung the goat, which are not true ; but I shall tell those which are true."

On the other hand, a writer who appears to have owed a grudge to the future Louis XIII. cites instances of perversity. The child would waken in the morning refusing to say his prayers, or would threaten that he would leave Saint-Germain and go to Paris should his devotional exercises be unduly prolonged, adding airily that he told God all he ought when he went to sleep. Scenes of a disorderly character also took place in the chapel, if affairs were not conducted there to the satisfaction of the infant despot. Accustomed to bear rule in the nursery, it was difficult for him to assume a subordinate position elsewhere. It was true that occasions occurred when he received rebuffs in unexpected quarters.

"*Hé!* Monsieur," said his little sister, Madame, not yet five years old, one day when, at dinner, her brother had given way to an ebullition of ill-temper, "you should not act thus. You would not so much as be known to be the son of the King. One must not take fancies; one must not give way to tempers, Monsieur. *Mamanga* will whip you."

Accustomed to assume a tone of masculine superiority in his intercourse with his sister, the Dauphin, cowed by this unexpected attack, remained speechless. Madame completed her admonitions.

"One does not speak thus to *gouvernantes*," she said in conclusion. "It is not pretty, Monsieur."

Whether the Dauphin was benefited by his sister's spirited protest does not appear. It was seldom indeed that any of his companions ventured to lift their voices in remonstrance.

In July the nursery was thrown into temporary mourning by the death of Madame de Montglat's husband. After the fashion of children, Louis caught the contagion of tears, and wept abundantly. After the fashion of children, he also wearied of the sight of grief. Asking on the following day to be taken to visit *Mamanga*, relieved for the moment from her duties, he added a desire that she should not weep, repeating his wish to her in person when the meeting took place.

"Good-night, *Mamanga*," he said. "I wish you not to cry. Laugh."

The King, who retained his misplaced confidence in the *gouvernante*, wrote her a kindly letter of condolence, proceeding to enumerate in a lighter tone the consolations remaining to her:

"Believe that, if God has deprived you of one good husband, He has given you, at the same time, another, and has also left you a good King and a good master who will take care of you. "My son will be henceforth your husband, and I your good King and master, and will show how much to my taste your services have been, and still are. I have commanded in especial the Sieur de la Chesnaye, who takes you this letter, and whom I have expressly sent to visit you, to assure you of this, and to say that the affection you have hitherto shown for my son, and the care you have taken of him and of my other children, causes me to forbid you to go into retreat for the *quarantaine*, which is to give yourself up to weeping and mourning, since the care of my children rests upon you, and will serve you as an excuse and as consolation in your just grief."

The autumn of this year was passed at Noisy, owing to the appearance of the plague at Saint-Germain. At the château, as soon as it was considered safe to return thither, the Verneuil brother and sister were christened, the names chosen for them being, strangely enough, Henri and Gabrielle—the King's own name and that of the woman whose place their mother filled in his affections. When the matter first came to the Dauphin's ears he had uttered a vehement protest with regard to the honour done to his half-brother.

"I will not have it!" he cried. "I will not call him Henri. He will have more than I. I am called Louis."

With difficulty he was pacified. Héroard, however, took an opportunity to recount the story of St. Louis, now a saint in heaven, and who had borne his name on earth. The child's objections were overcome, and he and little Madame stood sponsors for the children of the Marquise.

CHAPTER XII

1608

Marriage projects—The Chevalier Guidi at Court—Difficulties with the Queen—The Dauphin's fear of parsimony—Betrothal of the Duc de Vendôme—Don Pedro de Toledo's mission.

DURING the year 1608 Henri was much engaged in arranging marriages for his children. Whether or not his anxiety in the matter resulted from a conviction of the insecurity of his own tenure on life, he appears to have been eager to provide without delay for those whom his death would leave without a protector. Who, their father removed, would care for the fortunes of Gabrielle's children, or what would befall the son and daughter of the Marquise?

The more important political question of the marriages of his legitimate children had also to be dealt with; and in the course of the summer the Spanish project, hitherto scarcely more practical than that which assigned the King's eldest daughter to the Prince of Wales, was to become a serious possibility. At present little Madame had been taught to speak of England as her future home, her brother kindly holding out hopes that he would visit her there, although dissenting emphatically from the suggestion that he might sometimes cross the Channel in secret.

Papa, Louis objected, would in that case whip him when he came back. Nothing must be done without the King's permission.

The infant Duc d'Orléans was already betrothed, his promised bride being Mademoiselle de Montpensier, one of the wealthiest heiresses of France, who eventually became the wife of Henri's third son, and was the mother of La Grande Mademoiselle. The engagement of the Duke was made use of by the Dauphin's attendants to raise the question of his own marriage, and to renew their efforts to excite his interest in the Infanta. Would he not, some one inquired, like to be married as well as his younger brother? The Infanta, he was further informed, had his portrait in her possession. A Breton gentleman who paid a visit to Saint-Germain on his way home from Spain had wonderful tales to recount both of the Princess's beauty and of her affection for Monseigneur the Dauphin—tales to which Louis, in spite of an assumption of indifference, was observed to lend an attentive ear. It was said that she desired to put on a disguise that she might see him; and again, that she had been forbidden by the King of Spain to speak of her love for Monseigneur.

Louis's interest was by this time fully roused.

"I will beat that King of Spain well," he exclaimed.

"When I am fourteen," he said some weeks later, "they will talk of marrying me." And again his attendants took advantage of the opening to reintroduce the subject of Spain, and to repeat a story he much approved—to the effect that, playing at a game where ambassadors came from all parts of the world to wait upon her, the Infanta was accustomed to distinguish Louis's representative beyond all the rest, by causing him to be seated and covered in her presence.

Whilst it was thus plainly the object of the Dauphin's household to prepare his mind to look favourably on the prospect of the Spanish match, the King, if in no way disposed to fall unreservedly into the project, appears at this time to have lent it a certain amount of countenance. In February he looked on, in the company of two Jesuits—one of whom was a Spaniard—at a ballet performed by his children, his pride and pleasure finding vent in tears of joy ; and the Spanish priest was further entrusted with a gift for the Infanta, in the shape of an autograph maxim—" Le sage écoute le conseil qu'on lui donne "—in Louis's own handwriting.

The future of Henri de Verneuil was also being cared for ; there was indeed no fear that his mother would allow him to be overlooked. For him the Church was to provide a career ; and it was hoped that when a dispensation from Rome should have overcome the obstacles presented by his youth and by the irregularity of his birth, he would be placed without delay in possession of the Bishopric of Metz. The Marquise was continually pressing for the completion of the transaction, and by February the Cathedral chapter had been dealt with so successfully that a deputation from that body waited upon the little Marquis and recognised in him their future head.

Another of the King's projects was doomed to failure. He had conceived a desire to marry his daughter, Catherine de Vendôme, to Sully's son, for whom he cherished a fatherly affection, and who would furthermore inherit the large fortune the minister was amassing. Two hindrances barred the way. Young Rosny was already betrothed. It was, moreover, desirable that, before so close an alliance took place with the royal house, Sully himself, as well as his son, should abjure his Protestantism and embrace the Catholic faith. Eager for the accomplishment of his wishes, neither hindrance appeared to Henri insuperable, and he set himself with ardour to clear them from his path. He, the King, had found his way into the Catholic fold ; why then, he may have questioned, should not his faithful friend and servant follow him ? Sully, though stiff in his uprightness, was not supposed to be inaccessible to bribes, and Henri's offers were liberal. Marriage and conversion granted, the Duke was to be promised the reversion of the posts of Constable and of the government of Normandy.

The position taken up by the minister was clearly defined. With regard to the marriage he seems to have felt no scruple in setting aside, at his master's behest, the engagements into which he had entered. He was, he said, ready to make the King a present of his son ; let him do with him what he would. He would counsel the young man to yield obedience to the royal command. Religion was a different matter. To Henri's envoy, the Cardinal du Perron, Sully frankly confessed that he had long ago done his best to become a Catholic. His efforts had been vain ; and, though the singular toleration he had always shown in ecclesiastical matters, the fairness and justice of his dealings where Catholic interests were concerned, had roused his co-religionists to suspicion and caused them to entertain fears that he might follow his master's example, he had remained firm in his principles. For reasons he now detailed to the Cardinal he had found it impossible to reconcile to his satisfaction the Gospel and the Church, and he held out no hopes that his convictions would be shaken. Henri, though regretfully, shifted his ground. Since Sully cherished more affection for the Huguenots than for the King, he told him reproachfully, he would say no more on that point; reiterating, however, his demand that he would order his son to embrace the Catholic faith. Again Sully refused. His son was in Henri's hands, he repeated, to do what he would with him, nor would he dissuade him from yielding obedience in the matter at issue. But he must leave him free to make his own decision. Young Rosny showed no disposition to defer to the King's wishes in theological affairs, and the marriage negotiation collapsed.

In March Don Giovanni, the Queen's uncle, who had, irregularly and so much to his niece's dissatisfaction, filled the post of the Grand-duke's representative for the last eighteen months, took his departure. His sudden request for permission to quit the French Court was proffered on his return from an entertainment given by Concini in honour of the baptism of a daughter to whom the King himself, with the Princesse de Condé, had acted as sponsor. It was imagined in some quarters that his departure was due to this fresh proof of favour, accorded to a countryman for whom he had little liking. To the Queen his departure will have brought relief; and he could be the better spared in consequence of the arrival of a

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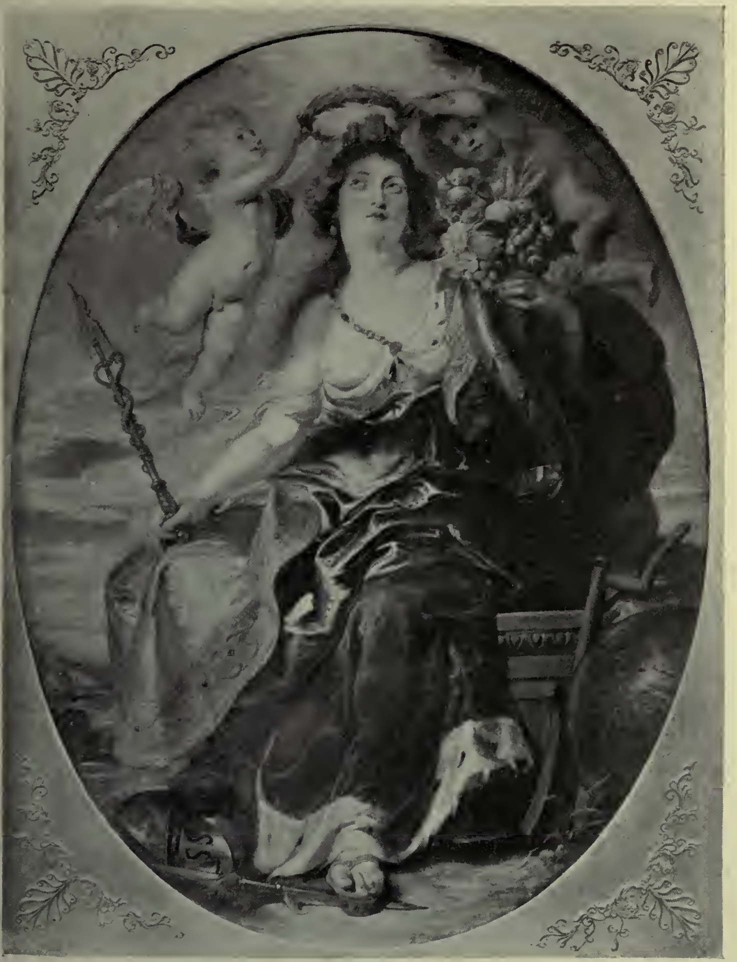

Photo by Levy et ses fils, after the painting by Rubens.

MARIE DE MEDICIS.

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certain Chevalier Camillo Guidi di Volterra, as accredited envoy from Florence.

A practised diplomatist, the new agent had been supplied with careful and detailed instructions, more especially as to the line of conduct he was to enjoin upon the Queen. She was to be urged to subordinate her private and domestic grievances to the welfare of the State ; to induce the King to take all possible care of his life ; and, though with dignity, not to refuse to lend herself to the furtherance of his pleasures. By so doing she would increase his affection for herself and defeat the malice of her enemies. The favour she showed towards Concini and his wife had called forth the Grand-duke's strongest disapproval, and he alluded to it with severity. It was, he said, odious, if not scandalous.

On Guidi's introduction to the Court he may have reasonably imagined that the difficulties of his mission had been painted in unduly dark colours. If the King, inclined to resent the Grand-duke's attitude with regard to Spanish affairs, showed at first some coldness towards the envoy, it quickly wore off ; and, politics having been dismissed, he became gay and friendly, drawing the Chevalier's attention more than once to the brightness displayed by the Dauphin or by others of the children present at the audience, and making inquiries as to what he thought of the Queen.

"Does she not seem to you in good health ?" he demanded. "Is she not looking well ? Have I not taken good care of her for you ?"

The Tuscan, as in duty bound, replied with enthusiasm in the affirmative, rendering thanks to God and to his Majesty. After which, perceiving that the King had business to transact, he withdrew discreetly to a distance ; whence he watched, with admiration, the ease of Henri's manners and the freedom of his intercourse with those around him.

The audience concluded, King and Queen went out driving together in friendly fashion ; and the envoy paid a visit to Louis, to whom he presented letters from the Grand-duke, his wife, and his son.

If Signor Guidi had flattered himself that he would experience no great difficulty in the fulfilment of his master's directions, he was quickly undeceived ; nor was it long before the favourable impression created by his first visit to Court was modified. He was soon to discover that to perform his duty as prescribed by the Grand-duke and at the same time to please the Queen would be no easy task. Marie had become, as he wrote, "non poco ombrosa e collerica." Though resenting the King's conduct towards herself, the coolness between her uncle and Henri had affected her sentiments towards the Grand-duke ; she was no longer inclined to render him obedience, and refused to be treated as a child. Queen of France and mother of four children, she declared she would not continue to submit to this species of discipline.

There was no more to be said. The lips of the Tuscan Ambassador were closed, and his counsels of prudence rejected ; the Concini couple flattered their mistress, encouraged her in her unwisdom, and were daily increasing in power and prosperity. There was even talk, reported the envoy, of a government being bestowed upon the favourite. The King, however, would not venture on that step, in the face of the indignation it would evoke. In the meantime, he had been appointed First Equerry to the Queen.

The visit of the Dauphin to Paris, where he had been present at Guidi's reception, had lasted no more than a week, but had been spent in learning royal ways. So large a number of the nobles had met him on his arrival that the King had been left almost deserted in the palace. Louis also received in audience the Venetian Ambassador, who came to take leave of him and to introduce his successor. Sully was visited, and the Arsenal inspected by the young heir, to whom the Duke presented a gift of a hundred crowns, half that sum being given to Madame and twenty-five crowns to Catherine de Vendôme. The Verneuil brother and sister received nothing.

The boy appears about this time to have conceived a horror of parsimony, probably instilled into him by those who hoped to profit by his liberality. Making purchases in Paris, he would insist upon paying more than was demanded, would give three crowns when one had been named as the price of some article ; and when fifteen were to have been the purchase-money of an attractive cart moved by springs, he refused to take possession of the toy until fifty had been handed over to the fortunate owner.

If it was desirable that the future King should be indoctrinated with the principle that generosity is a royal virtue, Madame de Montglat appears to have found at times that her lesson had been too well mastered.

"Monsieur," she remonstrated, when the child demanded four crowns to bestow upon the porters who had carried his luggage to Fontainebleau, "would not two crowns be enough?"

"*Hé!* no, *mamanga*," he pleaded; "they are so poor." And the *gouvernante* gave way.

Towards the poor he was always pitiful. Towards others every means was taken to teach him to assume from the first the place to which he was entitled as heir to the throne. It was Louis who, in the King's absence, took the watchword from his mother and passed it on to the captain of the guard, making minute inquiries as to the arrangements for the night. It was he who wrote, on the Queen's behalf, when she herself was ill, to his father. Nor was there any danger that the boy would forget his position.

"My place is everywhere," he replied loftily, when César de Vendôme had bidden him take his place in a ballet.

The pleasure the King took in his children was in some measure counterbalanced by the anxiety they caused him. Not only were they, and especially the Dauphin, threatened with danger from those whose interests would have been served by their removal, but health was a recurrent source of anxiety in the royal nursery. The little Duc d'Orléans had been delicate from his birth; and the detailed bulletins sent by his father to Sully bear witness to the close and personal watch he kept upon the child, his spirits fluctuating in accordance with the changes in the patient. "I am as gay to-day," he wrote, when amendment could be reported, "as I was sad yesterday"; and again and again the same note is repeated.

In April a fifth child had been added to those Marie had borne to the King, in the person of Gaston, to become, on his brother's death, Duc d'Orléans. The birth of a third son was a matter of rejoicing in which the Dauphin cordially joined. "I am glad," he said; "there are now three of us." His brother, Gaston, was to give him little reason to regard him with affection.

On the whole matters were going well with the King. During the month of July he succeeded in carrying out, in spite of strong and persistent opposition, the betrothal of his eldest son, César de Vendôme, to Mademoiselle du Mercœur, a project upon which his heart was set.

Attached to all his children, Henri had ever shown particular affection for the young Duke. He was his eldest son; he was also the son of Gabrielle; and the boy had been his constant companion. With regard to his nature and disposition he cherished illusions which death left undispelled. Louis's instinct was truer, and he had never liked his half-brother. The coming years were to show that he was right, and that there was little in Vendôme to command admiration or trust.

For this lad Henri was bent upon obtaining the hand of one of the great heiresses of the house of Lorraine, but there were difficulties in the way. The nobles of France, allied with the royal house, and proud of their lineage and descent, were not unnaturally inclined to resent the King's endeavours to wed their sons and daughters with his illegitimate children. In some cases his overtures were flatly rejected. When he attempted, a little later, to marry Gabrielle de Verneuil to the son of the Duc de Montmorency, Constable of France, the Duke bluntly refused to consent to the match ; and at first it seemed that the Duc de Mercœur would be equally unyielding. The women of the family were likewise in arms. Vendôme was no more than fifteen, and looked younger. The girl was somewhat older, and, supported by her mother and grandmother, was violent in her opposition. She would, she declared, not only rather become a nun, but would be buried alive sooner than consent. Young Vendôme, for his part, was not less reluctant. But the King, as his letters to Sully show, was bent upon the arrangement.

"Send me word," he wrote, "if that woman (the Duchesse de Mercœur) is not frightened ; tell me what you have learnt ; how the affair is going on. . . . I am told she is a little softened, but that she has determined, in consultation with those nearest to her, to gain time. Therefore she must be hurried, so that we may see light." In three or four days he recurs to the subject. The Bishop of Verdun was to be employed as intermediary : "I will give him all the fine phrases I can think of."

Sully—not, one imagines, without congratulating himself that religion had afforded his own son a way of escape—set himself to further the King's scheme as best he might. Three expedients were possible. The first was the exercise of the King's sovereign authority—which would be the most rapid. The second, and the more just and desirable, would be the use of gentleness and persuasion. The third was to proceed by means of common law—the longest and most vulgar. Sully advocated the second, a method already employed by Père Cotton, the King's Jesuit confessor, more adapted, in the Duke's opinion, than any other man to carry it to perfection, "for if ecclesiastics and those who deal with cases of conscience do not know how by these means to bring grandmother, mother, and daughter to a better state of mind, I know not how any other method can succeed."

Cotton, and others, were successful. The King's will was accomplished, and on July 16 the Dauphin assisted at the ceremony of the betrothal; the King, as Guidi wrote, "having been so determined and in such a fury on the subject that any one would have been dismissed who had opposed it." The unwilling pair were to be allowed a year's respite before their marriage, and the boy was to be sent to his government of Brittany. They appear, however, to have quickly become resigned to the inevitable, and the Tuscan Resident reported, not a fortnight later, that they were perfectly happy, and only anxious that the time of probation should pass swiftly.

This affair brought to a successful conclusion, Henri was at liberty to turn to his favourite amusements, and in particular to the completion of the improvements he had set in hand at Fontainebleau.

"Here is a means to have my canal finished," he said, when informed of the death of some official the sale of whose vacant post would bring in a considerable sum, "for you must know," wrote Malherbe, "that this canal is at present his predominant passion, and that, with all this heat—excessive if ever it was so—he was usually seated on a stone from five or six in the morning until midday, without parasol or any sort of shade, watching his masons at work."

The canal and kindred interests afforded a welcome distraction from serious business. Vendôme's future might be secured, but the more important question of the Spanish marriages was now to be pressed forward.

Four days after he had assisted at the betrothal of his half-brother the Dauphin received an important visit. The guest on this occasion was Don Pedro de Toledo, sent to France on a special mission, who, coming to salute the Dauphin, "kisses his hand, and says he is very glad to see that he is so handsome and *gentil* a prince, praying God for his prosperity."

That same day Don Pedro had been accorded a formal audience by the King, preparatory to entering upon the discussion of the business that brought him to Paris. The negotiation was intended to pave the way for no less than three intermarriages between the houses of France and Spain. Having failed to effect the subjugation of the revolted provinces of the Netherlands, Philip III. had devised this scheme in the hope of thereby detaching Henri from the cause of his rebellious subjects, and depriving them of the support, moral and material, they had hitherto never failed to receive from him.

With the object of furthering this project Don

Pedro had been sent. The envoy proved to have been singularly ill-chosen. Described by the King as a solemn idiot, his line of conduct and the arguments by which he sought to convince Henri of the wisdom of acceding to his master's wishes displayed a deplorable lack of diplomatic skill and ability. What was wanting in these respects he strove to supply by pomp and magnificence, his retinue numbering upwards of a hundred persons.

The first meeting of King and envoy did not, according to Lestoile, promise well for the future. Greeting the guest with courtesy, Henri expressed a fear that his reception had not corresponded with his deserts.

"Sire," replied the Ambassador, "I have been so well received that I regret the misunderstanding that may cause me to return with an army, in which case I should not be equally welcome."

"*Ventre Saint-gris*," exclaimed the King. "Come whensoever your master may please, and you shall not yourself lack a welcome. In the event of what you speak of coming to pass, your master and all his forces will find obstacles in their way at the frontier, which I may possibly not allow him leisure to inspect."

To Don Pedro's complaints of breaches of Henri's engagements with Spain, in the shape of assistance afforded to the Low Countries, the King was able to retort by pointing out that his alleged offences had been as nothing in comparison with the injuries inflicted upon himself. Yet, though differing, as was perhaps inevitable, upon matters of fact, this first interview was on the whole not otherwise than amicable, the King afterwards praising the humility and patience displayed by the envoy.

What Don Pedro thought of Henri—of his sagacity, quickness, and command of language—may be inferred from a remark he is quoted as making, to the effect that his master had not sent him to a King, but rather to a devil, "for," he added, "he knows more than the great Devil and all the other devils."

On the other hand, meeting one day a servant who was bearing the King's sword, he begged to be permitted to examine and handle it, and, after turning it every way, kissed the weapon before giving it back, happy, as he explained, to have seen and held the sword of the greatest, best, most valiant and magnanimous monarch alive.

It was one thing to pay exaggerated compliments; it was quite another to conduct a difficult mission with success. Preliminary courtesies over, the true object of Don Pedro's embassy was introduced at a subsequent audience, his manner of dealing with it leaving much to be desired. In blundering fashion he explained that his master had been informed from Rome that Henri was desirous of effecting the marriages in question, adding that, should Philip lend a favourable ear to the proposal, it would be conditional upon Henri's undertaking to bring about the submission of the United Provinces. The Pope had pressed the scheme, but Henri's conduct with regard to the Netherlands caused the King of Spain to hesitate.

Such was the substance of Don Pedro's discourse, such the means by which he strove to carry his point. To a sensitive, proud, and hot-tempered man it was little short of insulting, and not once or twice Henri gave the envoy the lie direct. "Ce n'est pas vrai," he said again and again. With regard to the intervention of Rome he declared that, whilst venerating the Pope as the successor of St. Peter, he made no account of him in connection with public affairs. He had neither thought nor said what was reported. It was a singular notion that he would have offered his children to any person in the world. They would only be accorded if demanded in due form.

Don Pedro had not made a successful beginning. Finding the King in no pliable humour, he had recourse to the Queen. Though Marie would doubtless have been glad to further Spanish interests, she received no encouragement from Henri to interfere in the matter. Let her not concern herself with it, he said; he alone would settle this business. And when Don Pedro, making one blunder after another, gave a hint that sounded like a threat that Philip might make peace with the Netherlands in order to be at liberty to turn his arms against France, Henri's retort was ready. He would be in the saddle before the King of Spain had his foot in the stirrup.

It was clear that he was not to be induced, by menace or persuasion, to abandon his allies, and Don Pedro's mission was wholly unsuccessful. Some months later he left Paris by night, in order to escape from his creditors. Thus ended the visit of the solemn idiot.

Yet it was not without one result. It had placed King and Queen in definite opposition upon an important question. At the moment it seemed that Henri had vindicated his authority and that his wife had little chance of seeing her favourite scheme carried out. But, as the sequel was to prove, the negotiations begun at the time of Don Pedro's mission were to end in the double marriage she desired.

CHAPTER XIII

1608—1609

Henri-Quatre preparing for war—Conciliates Concini—The Dauphin removed to the Louvre—His household—The King at the Arsenal—Sully under suspicion—His vindication—Henri and the Jesuits.

HENRI had asserted his determination to remain true to his pledges. He was neither to be bribed nor to be induced by threats to abandon the cause of the United Netherlands. The overtures of Spain having been rejected, it remained to make ready for a renewal of hostilities; nor was Henri unwilling to face that contingency. To the autumn of this year belongs a characteristic letter to Sully, showing him preparing for what was to come with a quiet confidence in the righteousness of the cause in which, if fighting was to ensue, he would fight.

"I am always," he wrote, "in the same faith that God will perform a *coup de sa main* in this business, which men will not have expected, and in contravention to all their designs. I have seen this happen for thirty years, and ever to my advantage. May it continue thus with reference to this affair, and may my faults and my ingratitude not serve as a hindrance!"

The next letter shows him supplementing the divine assistance he invoked by a careful watch upon domestic foes.

"Since M. de Mayenne and those of Antibe," he told Sully, "desire to overcharge me for their lands, I will permit them to sell to whomsoever they will. But I will put a Governor into the fortress who, devoted to me, will give them some uneasiness in the enjoyment of their possessions."

Firm and upright where public interests were concerned, the contrast presented by his conduct in private affairs is thrown into the more vivid and melancholy relief. In such matters he was destitute of the moral sense, as well as of a regard for what was due to his position and dignity. It was matter of increasing notoriety that the position held by the Queen's Italian favourites was a source, if not of danger, of scandal, and that their influence could not fail to be productive of trouble. Had Henri acted upon Sully's suggestion, and determined, by the simple exercise of sovereign power, to dismiss them, he would have had all the wisdom of France on his side. Even his enemies could not have found a pretext for condemnation. If he had been personally blameless it can scarcely be doubted that he would have adopted this method of securing a better chance of domestic peace and concord. But, underlying resentment at his wife's conduct, a consciousness that he had deprived himself of a moral right to interpose, may, co-operating with a fear of retaliation on her part, have prevented him from taking the sole dignified course. He resorted, instead, to the unworthy expedient of bribing the man he hated and despised. The insinuation of the Italian Resident that, were it not for the opposition of the French nobles, the King might have bestowed

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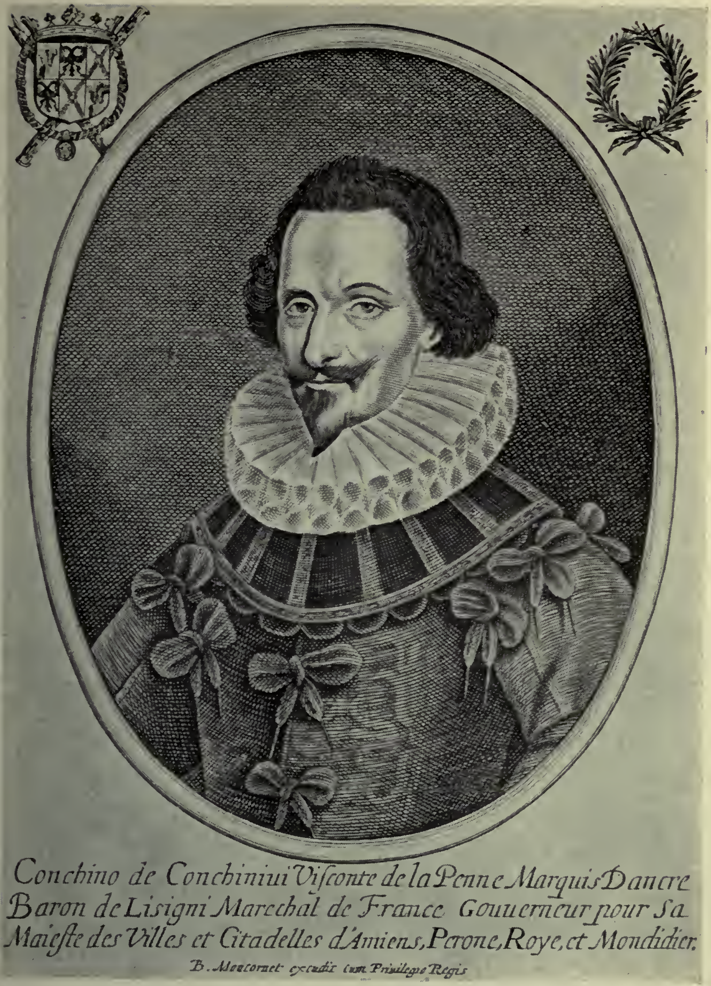
Conchino de Conchiniui Viſconte de la Penne Marquis Dancre
Baron de Lisigni Marechal de France Gouuerneur pour Sa
Maieſte des Villes et Citadelles d'Amiens, Perone, Roye, et Mondidier.
B. Moncornet excudit cum Privilegio Regis

From an engraving by B. Moniornet.

CONCINO CONCINI, MARQUIS D'ANCRE.

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a post of as much importance as a government upon Concini, as well as his consent to act as sponsor to his child, finds an explanation in a further report that, despairing of persuading the Queen by other means to admit the Marquise to Court, he had abased himself to conciliate her favourite, in the hope of thus obtaining his object.

The terms upon which the two appear to have been in August of this year tend to corroborate the discreditable report. The Court was at Fontainebleau when Concini, perceiving, or imagining that he perceived, a coolness in the King's demeanour towards him, did not hesitate to demand an explanation.

"Your Majesty," he complained, has something against me, since you do not show me your accustomed favour. This does not matter, as in whatever way you may treat me I am honoured. It is the cause that makes me uneasy, for it cannot but be false. For this reason I entreat you to inform me of it, that truth may triumph."

Answering that the Italian was mistaken, that his thoughts had merely been otherwise occupied, Henri gave him a fresh proof of good-will by according him, for the first time, the honour of a seat in his carriage; and later on in the year he is found dining at the palace Concini had caused to be erected in Paris.

Yet he was keenly alive to the situation and the consequences that might result from it.

"You see that man?" he once said to those around when the favourite, having been sent by the Queen to him on some matter of business, had withdrawn. "It is he who will govern when I am gone, and things will not go the better for it."

Weary, perhaps, of strife, he had, however, ceased to combat what he recognised as a danger. The policy of conciliation he adopted was successful, so far, at least, as outward appearances went; and the Queen's open indignation was replaced by an attitude of toleration and acquiescence.

"I showed your letter to my wife," wrote Henri to Madame de Verneuil in September, "asking her advice as to my reply"—in reference to a demand on the part of the Marquise that her children should be allowed to visit her. "I watched her face to see whether she would display emotion whilst she read your letter, as I had perceived was the case on other occasions when you were spoken of. She answered, without any change of countenance, that it appeared to her that I ought to indulge you in this. All the rest of the evening she was very cheerful."

During the same month he wrote again in the same sense. Mischief-makers found that the Queen would no longer listen to them. She had inquired after Henri de Verneuil—who had apparently been ill—and had said that his mother must have been very uneasy.

The Queen's new departure is capable of more than one interpretation. It might be the result of lassitude; she also, tired of fighting a losing battle, might have abandoned the struggle. On the other hand, there are those who explain it in a more sinister fashion. "This profound dissimulation alarms me," writes M. Dussieux. "I fear that the idea of vengeance had at this time entered into the heart of the Queen and her too-dear Concini ; and that the latter was already preparing that of which his contemporaries, the friends of the King, loudly accused him."

At Saint-Germain, meanwhile, the Dauphin was passing the last months of the period when, as a child, he would be left to the care of women. He had been provided with the companionship of a group of boys of his own age, the sons of nobles, who, with their respective tutors, were placed at the château. Of this little company Louis was the head, regulating the management of his household according to his own ideas of justice. "You are their master," Héroard told him. "When they do wrong you must rebuke them, and for their punishment tell them that, unless they are good, you will love them no longer. The King has placed them here with you in order that they may learn to love and serve you. They all belong to great and wealthy houses."

To threaten his companions with the loss of his affection did not appear, to the disciplinarian of seven, a sufficient penalty for their misdeeds. He had himself been trained by means of corporal punishment, and he was not disinclined to enforce the use of it in the case of lesser delinquents. Torigny, in the course of a game, had given a blow to a playmate. It was true, Torigny might plead that he had not done it intentionally ; but he must be taught to be more careful.

"Whip the Comte de Torigny," the Dauphin said, issuing his orders to the culprit's tutor. "You must have the whip, Comte de Torigny," he added, addressing him with the formality becoming the gravity of the occasion. It was useless to point out that the offence had been unpremeditated. He adhered to his verdict.

"But," pleaded Héroard, "you will command his tutor not to whip him, on condition he does it no more."

Louis was relentless.

"I do it," he said, "in order that it may not happen again."

The companionship of the boys carried with it drawbacks, and there were times when the Dauphin's unsocial instincts asserted themselves, and he wearied of being the centre of the group.

"Let me go into your room, *mamanga*, and write," he once asked, ceasing to play. "They do nothing but pester me. One pulls me; the other pushes me; another whispers in my ear. I know not where to turn."

At the miniature Court there were also rivalries as to the favour of the master, treated by Louis with discretion.

"Which do you like best, Monseigneur," asked the little Marquis de Mortemart—"M. de Liancourt or me?"

"I like you both," he replied impartially. "Stand you there, and you there, Liancourt."

The milestones marking life at Saint-Germain were the visits of the King. The boy's affection for his father, if less demonstrative than in earlier days, was growing and strengthening.

"What, my son?" Henri asked, when, as he was quitting the château on one occasion, Louis conducted him in silence to the stairs; "you have not a word to say? You do not kiss me when I am leaving you."

A crowd was around them. Quietly, and concealing his tears lest they should be observed, the child wept. As Henri saw it his face changed, and, himself not far from weeping, he took him in his arms, kissed and embraced him.

"I will say, as God says in the Holy Scriptures," he told the boy, "'My son, I rejoice to see those tears; I will have regard to them.'"

The King gone, Louis returned hastily to his apartments, still unwilling that his emotion should be observed. To Héroard's question as to the King's farewell words he returned a short answer:

"He told me to shoot with the arquebus," he said; nor could anything more be extracted from him.

The time of a final parting, with no farewell taken, between father and son was approaching. The dislike of the boy to the idea of his own sovereignty was once more apparent when, at the opening of the year 1609, the celebration of Twelfth Night was again under discussion.

"I will not be the King," he said; "I will not. Put in no bean," he added in a whisper to one of his attendants, "so that there may be no King."

"Monsieur," explained his nurse, "if God is King, you must fill His place."

"I will not do it," he reiterated obstinately.

"What, Monsieur! you refuse to fill God's place?"

He stopped short, evidently startled.

"*Hé!* that is for *papa* to do," he said; and only on receiving the explanation that at Saint-Germain the duty devolved upon him would he consent to perform the part.

A fortnight later the contemplated change was accomplished. The boy was removed from the château to the Louvre, and transferred from the tutelage of Madame de Montglat to that of the *gouverneur*, M. de Souvré. Louis was to put away childish things, to be weaned from his toys, to discard the term *papa* ; and, seated in dignity at his father's table, to be served by his own page.

In some verses published "by permission" and entitled, "L'Adieu de Monseigneur le Dauphin partant de Saint-Germain," the event was celebrated :

> Adieu donc, sans adieu, fideles Germaniques,
> Jamais je n'oublieray le château ny le lieu,
> Ou j'ai été nourri sous les lois pacifiques
> De mon Prince et mon roi que j'honore après Dieu.

"La sage Montglat," having instructed him in the faith, was now to surrender her charge to the brave Souvré to be taught valour.

Of the boy's prosaic sentiments with regard to the change little indication is given save the fact that, asked some months earlier by the Queen whether he would be *marri* at being removed from *mamanga* he answered laconically in the negative.

As his tutor he had been given a certain Des Yveteaux, who enjoyed a specially bad reputation, and was endowed, says Lestoile ironically, with all the good qualities required to make a true and perfect courtier of that day. The appointment had been made by Henri, in spite of all that could be said to dissuade him, and notwithstanding the Queen's tearful entreaties. Des Yveteaux had, Henri said, educated César de Vendôme well, and would do still better by the Dauphin. Remonstrance was useless ; nevertheless, when the tutor returned thanks, as in duty bound, to the Queen, she told him plainly that no acknowledgments were due to her ; had she been believed, he would not have obtained his post.

Souvré, on the contrary, was held to be not unworthy of the charge bestowed upon him, being one of the most accomplished and well-conducted men attached to the Court.

The change from Saint-Germain to the Louvre must have been great. Not Madame de Montglat alone, but Louis's brothers and sisters were left behind, meetings taking place only for the future when they were brought to Paris for a few days or he paid them a brief visit at the château. The comparative freedom of the country was replaced by the restraints of a city. The Dauphin was not, however, deprived of the companionship of playmates of his age, and was surrounded in Paris by the same band of *enfants d'honneur* as before, boys drawn from the most illustrious houses of France, who formed a miniature household upon which he continued to rehearse the art of ruling, jealous of any attempt to interfere with the exercise of his authority. Out riding, his "little gentlemen" marched before him, two and two, taking rank by their length of service ; he reviewed the company, armed, before the King, who took a "singular pleasure" in the show, and kept the roll-call of his comrades, written in his own hand. A precocious disciplinarian, he permitted no discourtesy between the boys; and what Héroard terms "la première justice de sa chambre" was held when one of them had given the other the lie, and was made to expiate the insult by a whipping. On other occasions he would protest against too summary a method of dealing with their delinquencies.

"It is their *gouverneurs* who flatter them," he said, when, two of the boys having been detected dicing with some lacqueys, M. de Souvré pronounced them incorrigible and would have had them sent back to their homes; "they must be told of it." Louis himself had no love of flattery; and possibly, even at eight, he had learnt to appraise it at its just value.

No outsider was permitted to chastise those belonging to his household.

"You are not my equerry," he told the Duc de Longueville sharply, when that young gentleman, aged fourteen, offered his services to correct the *enfants d'honneur*. "See how bold he is," he added in an aside to a bystander. "He is no equerry of mine."

Louis was himself, in spite of his new dignities, by no means exempted from the discipline of the rod. The birch had been brought into requisition, and though he received his chastisement with an air of bravado, and declared he felt no pain, it is evident that he stood in no little terror of its application.

More important than his studies was the recurrent question, as the boy grew older, as to the influences under which he was to be brought. Of the King's desires upon this point there can be no doubt, nor can it be questioned that it would have been to the one friend to whom he gave his entire confidence that he would have wished his son to turn. In spite of visits to the Arsenal, however, the same dislike of Sully as formerly is apparent in the boy. "He was at the Arsenal three or four days ago," wrote Malherbe. "I heard a gentleman who was there say that M. de Sully gave him a great reception; but that, whatever he did, he paid him no attention, and scarcely so much as looked at him."

It may be that the sentiments instilled and fostered by Louis's early training were supplemented by the jealousy always a marked feature of his character. For the King's affection for his minister was ever strengthening. Quarrels, of course, continued to take place—with a man so hot-tempered as Henri it could not have been otherwise; and Guidi, always bitterly hostile to the Duke, reported one such incident in particular which had threatened to end in Sully's resignation. The King, resenting what he considered undue favour shown by the minister to the Guises, had sent to remind him of Biron, and, further, had hinted that he was in the vicinity of the Bastille, where Auvergne was still expiating his treason in captivity. The violence of the rebuke, if truly reported, stamped it as the outcome of a mood of blind passion; and a few days later all was as before. Guidi might continue to believe that the Duke's favour was on the decline, and remonstrate with the Queen for acting as his protectress, saying she was nourishing a poisonous serpent who would in time prove a danger to herself, the Dauphin, and the realm; but Guidi was a stranger, and saw what he desired to see. In truth, the Arsenal was more and more becoming to the

King a retreat, where he could find a refuge from the pomp and ceremony inseparable from life in the palace, from the need of guarding his lips from any word capable of being turned to his disadvantage, and from the private annoyances ever recurrent in the neighbourhood of his wife.

"You are the only man to whom I open my heart," he wrote to the minister in the course of this last autumn of his life, "and from whose counsels I draw most comfort."

That same autumn, too, he was present when the contract of marriage between young Rosny and Mademoiselle de Créquy was signed; thus showing that he owed the young man no ill-will for his refusal to change his faith at his dictation in order to wed his own daughter. Both King and Queen affixed their signatures to the document, "which was all that passed," says Malherbe, "save that the King commanded the lovers to kiss each other."

Apart from the wisdom upon which Henri had learnt to rely, and the never-failing sympathy at his service, the grave statesman was capable, to a remarkable extent, of adapting himself to the humour of the soldier of fortune who retained to the end something of the boy; and during this last year Henri had shown his appreciation of the entertainment he found at the Arsenal by causing rooms to be set apart for his use whensoever he should be disposed to lodge there for a few days. On these occasions no officers of his household were to accompany him; there was to be none of the burden and formality of State; Sully providing what was necessary and receiving a certain sum yearly to defray the expenses of his royal guest.

The arrangement had come about in an unpremeditated fashion. On a certain day in March a lacquey had arrived from Chantilly, where Henri then was, with a note from his master to bid Sully expect him on the following morning, and begging that he would provide dinner, with fish, for a dozen persons.

Sully was familiar with his master's tastes. He made ready *ragoûts* such as Henri loved; and, moreover, when the company rose from table, cards and dice were produced, with a purse of four thousand pistoles for the King, and a like sum, as a loan, to defray the gambling expenses of his attendants. Henri showed that his preferences in food and amusement had been correctly divined.

"Come and embrace me, Grand-Maître," he said, "for I love you, as I ought, and I am so well pleased with being here that I will likewise sup and sleep; for I will not go to the Louvre to-day, for reasons I will tell you when I have finished playing."

He would, he added, take a drive, and desired that, on his return, he should find no one at the Arsenal save those he himself brought or sent. Nor did his satisfaction end here, resulting in the retreat afforded by the Arsenal being made at all times available.

No doubt Sully was proud of the position he filled, and possibly, by an unwise display of a consciousness of power, he threw down a challenge to his enemies they were not slow, as soon as his master was gone, to take up. It was said that he had told Queen

Marguerite that she, like the rest of France, was under his jurisdiction; only three persons being exempt from it, namely, the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin. "Thus," added Malherbe, "may the fortunate speak; but to do so is to forget the power of Fortune, and her threats of last winter."

So far chance, as well as his master, had favoured the Duke, and an incident in particular which might have come near to being fatal to the confidence reposed by the King in his minister had, by a happy chance, produced the opposite effect, and had turned to Sully's advantage. The facts were these. Certain matters, believed by Henri to have been mentioned by him to the minister alone, had become public property; and, in spite of Sully's asseveration, upon oath, that he had not been guilty of divulging them, it was hardly possible that a doubt should not have remained in his master's mind, not of his friend's fidelity, but of his discretion and prudence. The affair was in this condition when, by a piece of singular good luck, it was placed in the Duke's power to clear himself from all suspicion and to bring home the guilt to the true culprit. A letter addressed by the King's friend and confessor, Cotton, to a brother Jesuit came into the minister's possession; wherein was contained all the information in question. Putting the incriminating document into Henri's hands at their next meeting, Sully made his justification. It was entirely successful. Unable to deny that he had spoken openly to the priest, the King, after reading the letter twice over, made a significant comment upon its contents.

"I confess," he said, "that there is more of loyalty and honour in you, and of truth in your words—wicked Huguenot that you are—than in many Catholics, even ecclesiastics, devout and scrupulous as they appear. And I will say no more to you upon this subject."

Whether by reason of his indiscretion or from other causes, the influence of Père Cotton suffered, according to Guidi, a temporary eclipse. It did not prove lasting; and, having gone twice running to hear Mass in the Jesuit church, the King gave those about him to understand that it had not been done without a purpose, but "that the world might know that he loved Père Cotton and his Order more than ever."

CHAPTER XIV

1609—10

Henri and Mademoiselle de Montmorency—The King's desire for domestic peace — His forebodings — Henri and his son — The Infanta's portrait—Chances of war—Sully and the Dauphin.

ON March 2, 1610, the Dauphin was present at a ceremony forming part of an episode displaying the King in his least worthy aspect. This was the betrothal, to be followed shortly by the marriage, of the Prince de Condé and Charlotte de Montmorency, daughter of the Constable who had refused to allow his family shield to be blemished by a match between his son and the King's daughter.

The story of Henri's latest passion, his infatuation for young Bassompierre's destined bride, scarcely emerged from childhood, is too well known to call for more than a passing notice. Bassompierre, a courtier by profession and taste, warned that he had to choose between his promised wife and the King's favour, made little difficulty in relinquishing his claim to the first ; and Henri bestowed her upon his cousin, Condé, first Prince of the Blood, counting upon the young man's indifference to throw no obstacle in his path ; and anticipating that Condé, ill-favoured, of bad reputation, and addicted to wine, would not prove a formidable rival in the girl's affections.

And yet it is singular that, almost at this moment, Henri had been contemplating the possibility of a compromise whereby, if Marie de Medicis would, for her part, agree to the dismissal of her Italian favourites, he would himself engage to give her no further cause for complaint. Whether he would, at this stage, have kept his pledge is questionable; that it was offered in good faith cannot be doubted. Weary of a continual condition of domestic strife, he was unfeignedly anxious to arrange a basis of agreement.

If this ultimate phase of a great man's existence is painful to those to whom he is a hero, it was probably in many ways no less painful to the hero himself. To Henri's happiness love and approval were, as some one has pointed out, specially necessary ; and the sense that by many of those around him he was neither loved nor approved cannot have failed to be bitter. Underlying, too, his natural gaiety, was the melancholy not seldom accompanying it, and the latter at times gained the upper hand. To Montigny and Cicogne, two of his friends and companions, he once said that he would rather be dead ; and when they strove to prove how small was his reason for desiring death, he remained unconvinced.

"You are happier than I," he told them.

Troubled in mind and spirit, he was oppressed by public as well as domestic cares. Rumours of intrigues with Spain disquieted him the more owing to their vagueness. Concini and his wife were known to be in communication with the enemy ; hints were thrown out of other traitors whose names were withheld. Who was false, who true ? Who could tell ? That the Queen's sympathies were increasingly enlisted on the Spanish side was certain. More and more the marriage scheme had possession of her mind. An alliance with his old antagonist, to replace his engagements with Protestant princes, was urged upon the King, and whilst he was firm in adherence to his pledges, the difference of opinion between himself and his wife on a question of vital importance will have accentuated their chronic condition of discord. The distrust of her husband with which the Queen had been inspired by the Concini had increased to so great a degree that she entertained suspicions wounding alike to his honour and to his good sense; declined to eat what he sent her from his table, and even caused her food to be prepared in the apartments of the Italian couple.

Swayed by the influence of her favourites, Marie was also bent upon obtaining from the King that which she had long desired—namely, her own coronation, to be accompanied by every adjunct of ceremonial magnificence, with the object of finally asserting her position and that of her children, and of making it known to the world.

This last demand was both comprehensible and pardonable. That she was still, after more than ten years of marriage, uncrowned, might have supplied a weapon to be used against her in hostile hands. War was imminent; the King was to be once more in the field, and Marie was to fill the place of Regent in his absence. It was of the last importance that no shadow of doubt should be allowed to rest upon her position. That she was not to possess undivided authority, but was to share it with a Council of State, was regarded by her as an insult, and she was the more urgent in requiring that her *Sacre* should take place before Henri quitted Paris.

With this demand, reasonable though it was, the King was most unwilling to comply. In spite of his sagacity and shrewdness, reiterated warnings of coming calamity had made their impression upon his mind. He was haunted by the memory of prophecies according to which he was not destined to survive his fifty-eighth year ; and was oppressed in particular by forebodings that, should he yield to the Queen's importunities and permit her coronation to take place, misfortune would ensue.

It was in this mood of melancholy that the idea of restoring domestic concord by means of mutual concession had occurred to him. Nothing came of it ; Marie did not close with his offer, and a last and disgraceful chapter was unhappily to be added to his record. The true tragedy was not the catastrophe of May 14, 1610. The day that Ravaillac's knife did its work was no more than the consummation, the climax, of the tragedy enacted during Henri's last years, when the greatness of the great King had struggled for mastery with his littleness, and the last had not seldom got the upper hand ; when, to quote Michelet, the man, "loved and lovable, whose strength was invoked by all the world, but in whom the principle of duty was absent, and who was weak and changeable, declined and sank." Irresponsible, strangely devoid of the moral sense, one questions whether he was so much as conscious of his fall. Of that fall the episode which filled so important a place in the history of his last year was proof, had proof been needed. Duty, morality, pride, dignity, self-respect, were all to be sacrificed to an emotion. It must have been difficult even for those who loved him, and they were many, not to feel something approaching to contempt.

Where public matters did not conflict with his personal interests he continued firm, refusing to yield to the pressure brought to bear upon him in reference to the disposal of his children. Madame, if he could compass it, was to become the wife of the Prince of Wales—a gallant lad who talked of nothing but learning the art of war under Henri himself; the Dauphin was destined to be married to the heiress of Lorraine, and in the summer young Bassompierre was dispatched on a secret embassy with the object of sounding the Duke, her father, on the subject. The King, as it fell out, was to have no voice in the settlement of these matters.

"I pray God," he told Louis, as he drank to him on his eighth birthday, "I pray God that, in twenty years' time, I may be able to give you the whip."

"Pas, s'il vous plaît," was the Dauphin's reply.

"What!" said the King in mock protest, "You would not have me able to give it to you?"

"Pas, s'il vous plaît," repeated the child.

There was no fear of it. Eight months later Henri was dead.

In graver moods the King would look on to the future, when he would have been removed from the scene of action, and would make his forecasts as to the course of events. Calling his wife, in jesting fashion, Madame la Régente, he admitted, in answer to her protests, that she might be right in desiring, in her own interest, the lengthening of his life. The words were spoken when, once more, his will had been brought into collision with that of his heir, and he had again recognised the strain of obstinacy in the boy's nature.

The quarrel had taken place over a mere trifle—a question of jumping over a ditch a foot and a half wide in the park at Fontainebleau. The boy had leapt it standing, without making any difficulty. Bidden by his father to attempt it running, he answered by a dogged refusal; afraid lest, miscalculating his distance, he should fall in and become an object of the derision from which he shrank with the sensitiveness not uncommon in children. The King, unused to disobedience, was roused to anger so violent that, had he not been prevented, he would have immersed the boy in the water; but all was of no avail. Threatened with the whip, Louis replied that he would prefer it to taking the required leap; accepting his punishment—administered in spite of a tardy offer of compliance—with defiance and protesting that he was not hurt.

In the scene which followed between King and Queen Henri gave utterance to a prediction as to the future awaiting his wife.

"You wept," he told her sternly, "because I have had your son whipped a little severely. You will one day weep much more for his misfortunes or for your own. . . . Of one thing I can assure you—that you being of the temper I know, and foreseeing what will be his—you being self-willed, not to say headstrong, and he stubborn, you will certainly have a bone to pick with one another."

In which Henri was to prove, to Marie de Medicis' cost, right.

If, with regard to his heir, Henri's system of discipline was sharp, he acted with deliberate intention. His other children, Marie once complained, would not have been treated with a like severity ; nor did he deny the charge, giving his reasons for what might wear the guise of injustice. Should they play the fool, he said, they would not escape punishment. No one would whip the Dauphin.

During these last years of Henri's life the struggle of contending aims at Court found expression in the fact that, in spite of his well-known sentiments, efforts were persistently renewed to rouse and keep alive Louis's interest in the Infanta. Did he not consider her beautiful ? asked the Marquis de Gudalesta, visiting the Dauphin on the way to Spain. Would he not like to possess her portrait ?

Though answering politely in the affirmative, the boy was careful to reassert his loyalty to national traditions. His heart, he added, was French. Yet, notwithstanding the proviso, the attempts of his mother and her friends to instil their ideas into his mind had not been fruitless."

"There is my wife," he told his playmates one day, as he pointed to a picture of Anne hanging in the Queen's chamber. "One must go and take her," he said, when M. de Souvré observed that the Spaniards might not consent to surrender their Princess.

Meantime, the engagement of the Prince de Condé and Mademoiselle de Montmorency had been followed by their marriage, notwithstanding certain misgivings as to the future which had caused the bridegroom-elect to suggest to the King that the arrangement should be cancelled. Henri had been fully determined to carry it out; the Prince, poor, young, of doubtful legitimacy, and accustomed to maintain an attitude of submissive docility towards the King, was in no position to assert his independence; and, reassured by Henri, he consented to allow matters to proceed. The wedding accordingly took place quietly at Chantilly, the bride's home, during the month of May.

Not many weeks had elapsed before the Prince's apprehensions were justified, and it had been made plain to him that, were his wife's honour to be safeguarded, she would be best kept at a distance from Court. Showing more spirit than had been expected of him, he acted upon this conviction, in spite of the fact that both the Princess herself and her father, dazzled by the possibilities contained in the King's passion, testified a disposition to play into Henri's hands, and a paper demanding that the marriage should be annulled received the signature of the bride.

The King's indignation at Condé's conduct was as great as if he had undoubted right on his side.

"I beg you to believe," he wrote to the Constable in June, "that my nephew, your son-in-law, behaves like the devil here. It will be necessary that you and I should speak to him together, so that he may be good."

Condé was in no wise disposed to amend his ways to suit the King's humour. By November Henri's folly had reached such a height that, despairing of bringing him to reason, the Prince had taken the strong measure of removing his wife from temptation by carrying her off to Landrecies and placing himself under the protection of the Archduke, representative of the King's irreconcilable Spanish foes.

The step could not fail to rouse Henri to fierce anger. The world-wide publicity given to a private scandal to which he must have felt that disgrace attached ; the fact that it was in hostile territory that his cousin had taken refuge—all combined to embitter his wrath ; and his resentment was great towards the Power that had afforded shelter to the fugitives. To attribute, as some authorities are inclined to do, his decision to enter upon a European war to a frustrated intrigue is, however, another matter ; and is, to say the least, a manifest exaggeration. He was ready for war ; Sully was ready for war ; the finances of the country admitted of it ; and though the episode may have served to precipitate matters, it can have done no more.

Two parties, of course, existed in the State—a war and a peace party—the men who would have encouraged the King to pass his days in the inglorious pursuit of pleasure and those who, like Sully, contrasting his brilliant past with what had followed it, would have had their master vindicate his old reputation, and, almost singlehanded—a twelve years' truce had been concluded between Spain and the Netherlands—show that he was still the victor of Ivry and could withstand the tyranny the house of Austria was seeking to establish.

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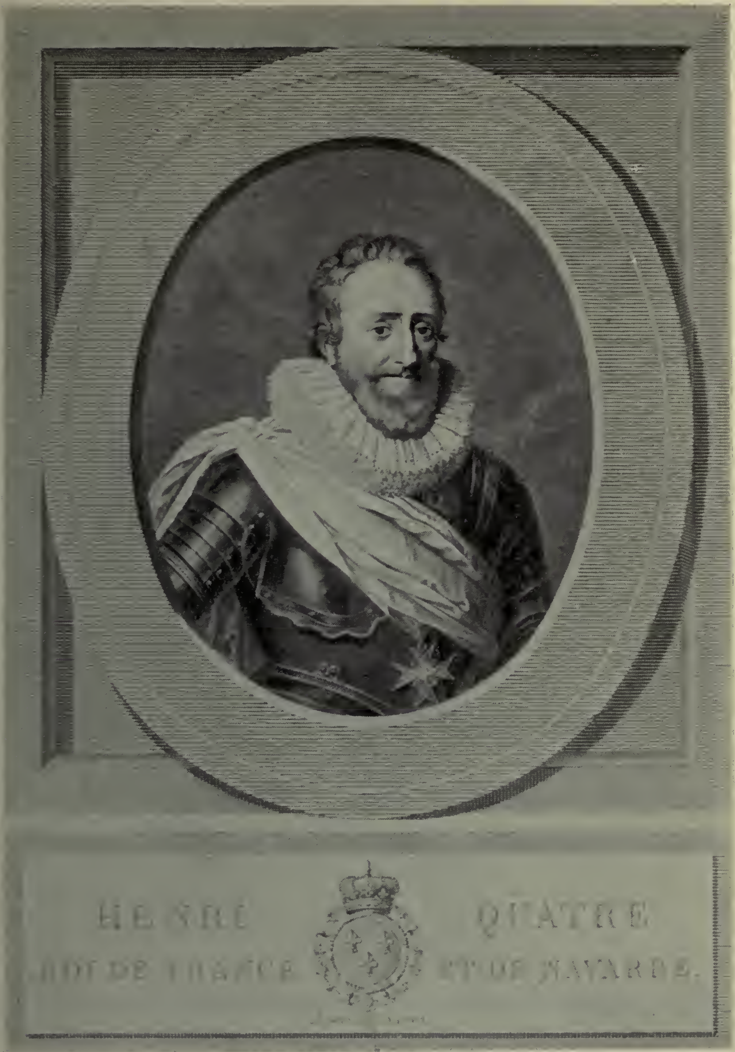
HENRI QUATRE
ROI DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE.

From an engraving by P. Audouin, after the picture by Pourbus.

HENRI IV.

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A singular conversation is recorded, when Henri took Sully's advice as to the two courses open to him ; the minister assuring him, as he recommended the harder and steeper path, that should he elect to tread it and to declare war, sufficient funds were available to supply an army of forty thousand men for three years, without fresh taxes.

"Not wishing to interrupt you," the King asked, "how much money do I possess, for I have never known ?"

"Guess, Sire," replied the Minister of Finance. "How much do you think you have ?"

"Twelve millions ?" hazarded Henri.

"A little more," was the reply.

"Fourteen ?" said the King, raising the figure two millions at a time, until, when the sum of thirty had been reached, he embraced the Duke and refused to go further.

It was a proud moment for Sully as, demonstrating the amplitude of the funds at his disposal, he unfolded the great schemes he cherished. They might have been carried out had Ravaillac not intervened. One imagines that the heart of the great soldier must have burnt within him as he contemplated the possibilities a war would afford. But a death on the battle-field was to be denied him.

War was plainly a necessity, unless the house of Austria was to be permitted to establish the autocracy to which it aspired. The death of the Duke of Cleves had left, in Henri's phrase, all the world heir to his rich inheritance. In the absence of any one with a direct and undisputed right to the provinces he had possessed, both the Emperor and certain of the German Protestant princes laid claim to them. It was not difficult to foresee that the matter would not be decided without recourse to arms, and to Henri the opponents of Spain looked, as to their natural leader. In spite of less worthy preoccupations, the King was deeply concerned with the question of the future. Sully was equally anxious; and there were long conversations between the two when, leaning on the balcony at the Arsenal which overlooked the Seine and a large part of Paris, the King no doubt discussed with the minister the chances of the approaching struggle. Would the United Netherlands again throw themselves into the conflict? What would be the attitude of the new Grand Duke of Tuscany, who, on succeeding his father, had lost no time in displaying his Spanish proclivities?

With regard to such matters, King and minister must have been for the most part in full accord. Yet, if Malherbe is to be believed, and there is no reason to doubt it, a serious quarrel took place at this very time between them, caused, on this occasion, by a less creditable feature in Sully's character than the uncompromising rectitude which had at other times brought him into collision with his master. A certain office had fallen vacant, and Sully, having demanded the disposal of it, was referred by the King to young Vendôme and his mother-in-law, to whom it had been already awarded, and who consented at once to relinquish their claims. Annoyed that the boy had treated a matter of importance so lightly, Henri expressed his displeasure; whereupon Vendôme retorted that M. de Sully was too powerful to be refused, and that, had the post in question been worth double, he would have handed it over to him. A quarrel with the Duke followed, and the King, entering his wife's apartment, gave vent to his irritation. Sully, he said, had at last made himself insufferable, and could no longer be borne with. Once more the hopes of those who hated the minister were raised. Once more they were destined to be dashed to the ground. "On the morrow," records Malherbe, "the King gave him a better reception than ever."

In another direction Henri had at length made what appeared to be a permanent break with his past. Whether Madame de Verneuil would ever have regained her ascendancy cannot be determined. For the time she had lost it. In the same letter which mentions the passing quarrel with Sully, the poet stated that the Marquise had been a month at a village not more than a league from Paris, but that no meeting had taken place between her and the King. Her day was over. Did she, or did she not, avenge herself by making once again common cause with his enemies? The question has never been satisfactorily answered.

In addition to cares of State; to the necessity of taking thought for the coming campaign; to the resistance he was opposing to the pressure brought to bear upon him by his wife and others with regard to the Spanish proposals; to private annoyances and vexations, Henri was also, as ever, ceaselessly confronted by the spectre of treachery. Stories—some false, some true—were afloat. A book in gilt binding and containing signatures written in blood had been caught sight of. Quickly concealed, it had not become known to what the signatories were pledged; but sinister explanations were suggested. And, again, a band of men, armed and mounted, were said to have been seen in the forest near Saint-Germain. Taken separately, such rumours might have been disregarded. Viewed in conjunction with other circumstances, and interpreted by the light of current prophecies, they were not without their effect upon men's minds and nerves.

The year 1610 was come. It was the last spring that father and son were to spend together; and, pending the separation the coming campaign would bring, it is evident that they were constant companions. The subject of the projected war was in all men's thoughts, and was freely discussed in the schoolroom at the Louvre.

"If the King, my father, should go to Flanders, would the King of Spain seize upon France?" asked the Dauphin, interrupting a lesson in history to apply its teaching to questions of more immediate interest.

"What insolence!" he exclaimed, another time, when the Chevalier de Vendôme, bragging, asserted that he alone was to accompany the King to the field of battle. "None but he to go!" It would be seen that it would be otherwise—that Louis himself would ride forth on the white horse given him by M. le Grand, and would take the Prince de Condé prisoner.

Pending the opportunity of sharing in practical warfare, the Dauphin was fain to be content with playing with his toy soldiers at home.

"You will always be a child, Monsieur," Souvré told him once.

"It is you who keep me one," retorted the boy, with anger.

The charge was more likely to be true of others than of the *gouverneur*. Souvré was plainly anxious, now and afterwards—perhaps over-anxious—to induce his pupil to put away childish things. But there were doubtless those, especially at a later date, who would have preferred that Louis should confine his attention to toys rather than direct it to matters of greater importance. In some degree and measure they were successful, but if he was childish in some respects, he was not without considerable natural intelligence, and was keenly observant of what went on around him. He might resign himself, for the time, to be ruled by those placed over him; he looked forward, none the less, to a day of emancipation.

As he lay in bed, apparently engrossed by the miniature engines with which he was playing, he listened to a dispute between Madame de Montglat, representing the past, and M. de Souvré, in the possession of the present; his comment indicating the trend of his reflections.

"I may say," asserted the *ex-gouvernante*, "that Monseigneur the Dauphin belongs to me. The King gave him to me at his birth, saying, 'Madame de Montglat, here is my son, whom I give you. Take him.'"

"He belonged to you for a time," admitted Souvré. "Now he is mine."

"And I hope," put in the small bone of contention without raising his voice or intermitting his occupation, "I hope that one day I may be my own."

Again and again, during these last months of his father's life, his old dislike of Sully is displayed. At the Arsenal he was a frequent visitor, at the Arsenal he made his first appearance in a public ballet, dancing before the assembled Court; but to Sully personally he was as ungracious as before, notwithstanding the minister's evident wish to propitiate the good-will of his master's son.

"Monsieur, would you like some money?" he asked his little guest as he was walking in the garden one spring day. "But tell me if you would," he urged, as the boy answered contemptuously in the negative.

"If you wish to give any, let it be taken to M. de Souvré," answered Louis coldly, refusing to accept the personal favour, and gathering some blossoming sprays from a tree near at hand.

The Duke declined to be discouraged.

"When you come here again, Monsieur," he said, "you will find a hundred purses full of crown pieces upon that tree which you admire."

"It will be a fine tree," answered the boy indifferently, without giving it a glance.

"C'est un glorieux," he said, angered by the exclusion of some of his attendants from an entertainment at the Arsenal.

Louis was wrong. Sully was no braggart. If he was proud he had much to be proud of. The end of his wise administration, the close of the toil that had done so much for France and for its King was at hand.

CHAPTER XV

1610

The spring of 1610—Predictions of evil—The Queen's approaching *Sacre*—Henri's fears—Omens of misfortune—Marie de Medicis crowned at Saint-Denis.

THAT spring of 1610, as it advanced, was a time of excitement and unrest. The air was full of contradictory expectations and reports. All had been made ready for a great and decisive struggle for European supremacy. The combatants stood over against each other, leaning as it were upon their swords, until the signal should be given for the fight to begin. Men, in all lands, were looking forward, with hope and fear, to the result.

At Paris, and throughout France, a curious sense of uncertainty prevailed, and a consciousness of impending disaster was widely diffused. The atmosphere was thick with prophecies of evil. It was pre-eminently an age of soothsayers, and reiterated forecasts of calamity were remembered when the blow had fallen and the King was dead. Nor can it be denied that a singular unanimity prevailed, amongst the seers who claimed to interpret omens and to discern the future, as to some danger, now vague, now more sharply defined, overhanging France and its King.

More and more was the King's mind becoming clouded by presentiments of doom, by forebodings that, so far as he was personally concerned, the preparations for war would be fruitless.

"I know not why," he once said to Bassompierre, "but I cannot persuade myself that I shall go to Germany," and to others besides Bassompierre he spoke on several occasions of his conviction that death was near. Most of all to Sully he opened his mind on the subject.

"Ah, my friend," he would say, "how displeasing to me is this *Sacre*! I know not why, but my heart warns me that evil will come of it."

Seating himself in a low chair provided for his use in the minister's apartment at the Arsenal, he sank into a melancholy reverie; then, rousing himself, he rose suddenly to his feet.

"By God!" he exclaimed, "I shall die in this city, and shall never leave it. They will kill me, for well do I see that my death is the only remedy to the danger that threatens them. Cursed *Sacre*, you will be the cause of my death!"

Impressed, in spite of himself, by the strength of the King's apprehensions, the Duke, though attempting to make light of them as mere fancies, suggested that, under the circumstances, it might be well to put an end not only to the dreaded ceremonial but to the war, the King's journey—all. Let Henri give the word and it should be done.

With regard at least to the coronation, it seemed that Henri was disposed at one moment to act on the suggestion. Were the *Sacre* abandoned, his mind would be at rest, and he would start for the war fearing nought. "For, to hide nothing from you," he said, opening his heart entirely to his friend, "I have been told that I shall be killed at my first great ceremonial, and that I shall die in a coach. It is this which renders me so fearful."

More and more infected by the King's misgivings, Sully proposed a new plan. Let Henri leave Paris at once, on the morrow, neither returning to the capital nor entering a coach for a prolonged period. The Duke was ready to cause all the workmen employed in preparations to cease from their labours.

Henri hesitated.

"I am willing enough," he admitted, "but what will my wife say? She is wonderfully bent upon this *Sacre*."

"Let her say what she will," answered Sully bluntly; he could not believe that, aware how the King regarded the matter, she would persist in her desire.

Henri knew better. Unable to face what would follow should the minister's advice be taken, he decided to allow the affair to take its course, and the workmen continued their operations.

The ceremony was to take place on Thursday, May 13. On the ensuing Monday, when the solemnities following upon it were concluded, Henri was to start for the seat of war. He had written to the Archduke formally announcing his intention of assisting his allies in the vindication of their rights in the matter of the succession of Cleves and Juliers, and asking whether, since his route lay through Flanders, he was to enter that territory as friend or as enemy. All was completed; the troops were already on the march. The great soldier was once again to take the field. There was nothing more to wait for save the *Sacre*.

As the day appointed for it approached the spirit of uneasiness and unrest abroad continued. On May Day the King, returning with Guise and Bassompierre from the Tuileries to the Louvre, quitted his companions for a few minutes in order to hasten the Queen in dressing for dinner, lest he should be kept waiting.

Pending his return, the two were leaning idly over the balustrade overlooking the courtyard of the palace, when the "mai" set up in the centre of it crashed down without apparent cause and lay pointing towards the small staircase leading to the King's apartment.

Bassompierre, with a strain of German blood in his veins and inclined to superstition, called the attention of Guise to the fallen branches.

"I would give much that it had not happened," he told him. "It is a very ill omen. God protect the King—the 'mai' of the Louvre! It would be made more of in Italy or Germany," he added, as the Duke uttered a contemptuous protest, "than here. God preserve the King and all belonging to him!"

Unperceived by either, Henri had drawn near, and, overhearing Bassompierre's words, took the answer upon himself. They were fools, he told them, to pay attention to prognostications. Astrologers and charlatans had predicted danger to him for thirty years. When the time of his death should arrive, the prophecies touching that particular year would be remembered, all the others forgotten.

It was doubtless true. But the mind is not governed by reason, and no one reading Sully's memoirs could fail to perceive that Henri was far from being unmoved by what he affected to treat with contempt.

As the days went by warnings and omens increased and multiplied. Now it was a nun who was afflicted by a startling vision of death and murder ; an image of St. Louis was said to have shed tears ; bells tolled without visible agency ; a little shepherdess, bringing home her flock at night, asked the meaning of the word "King." A voice, she said, had cried in her ears that the King was slain. A general condition of nervous apprehension prevailed. Things of small account in themselves were afterwards remembered. The King had been heard more than once, as if by accident, to allude to his wife as the Regent. Again, two days before his death, he had shown the Dauphin to the nobles present, saying, "Here is henceforth your master." Had all gone well, these trifles would have been buried in oblivion. The King dead, they became part of the multitude of incidents that had seemed to prepare the way for the tragedy and usher it in.

At length the long-anticipated ceremony took place. On Wednesday, May 12, the Court slept at Saint-Denis, all the royal children being brought from Saint-Germain for the occasion. The Comte de Soissons had left Paris owing to a quarrel concerning the dress to be worn by the young Duchesse de Vendôme, considered by him to infringe upon the rights of the Princes of the Blood ; Condé and his wife were still finding shelter with the King's enemies ; Sully, pleading sickness as his excuse, was absent ; but, with few exceptions, all the French nobles, dignitaries of the

Church, and officers of State assisted at the Queen's tardy triumph.

The hour of midday on the Thursday had been fixed for the *Sacre*. On that morning Henri appeared to have thrown off his melancholy, and was unusually gay. Yet, as he passed from the brilliant spring sunshine outside into the dimly-lighted church, thronged from end to end with a silent and expectant crowd, he observed to those around him that he was reminded of the scene of the last great Judgment—for which might all men prepare.

To Marie de Medicis that moment was the proudest of a life marked by not a few humiliations. To-day she—not the King—was the central figure of the pageant; she had achieved the object of her legitimate desire. Nothing was wanting to complete her satisfaction. The account of the show, as she gave it later on to a Tuscan envoy, indicates the attention she had paid to its details and the gratification it afforded her to recall them even after the tragedy which might have blotted them out from her memory. The sight, she told her countryman, had been as fair a one as was possible in France. Dwelling upon its salient features, she described the arrangement of the seats, princes, princesses, cardinals, bishops, and officers of State being placed in their several orders and degrees below her. It was, she agreed—adopting the simile suggested by the obsequious Italian—like Paradise, the choirs of angels being represented by the tiers of spectators.

One incident had occurred to which, as to others, an ominous significance had been attached. The stone marking the place of sepulchre of the Kings of France had cracked across in a manner rendering it necessary to close the fissure with lime. But Marie had been kept ignorant of the mishap, and, with this exception, all had gone well. If the heavy crown, set insecurely on the Queen's head, had come near to falling, she had steadied it so effectually with her two hands that it remained firmly fixed in its place, and the ceremony concluded without misadventure. The Dauphin, with no knowledge of the past heart-burnings, doubts, suspicions, fears, lending its chief importance to what was no less his triumph than that of his mother, played a leading part in the show. Dressed in cloth of silver, and covered with diamonds, he preceded the Queen in the procession, and with his little sister, Madame, assisted in placing the crown —inefficiently, as it appeared—upon her head. Every one of her children were present, Gaston, Duc d'Anjou, and Henriette Marie, Charles I.'s future wife, being carried in the arms of their attendants.

As Marie de Medicis left the church, the long rite concluded, her position was vindicated. Whatever the future might have in store for her, no one could dispute her right to be considered the lawful wife of Henri-Quatre, or her son's position as his heir. In the plenitude of her satisfaction, she felt she could afford to laugh at presages of misfortune ; and, meeting one of the astrologers who had foretold that the festivity was destined to end in weeping, she is said to have taxed him gaily with his error.

"Madame," replied the soothsayer, "your *entrée* has not yet been made. God grant my science may be at fault."

Henri, on leaving Saint-Denis, had likewise met an acquaintance. In his case it was a Jesuit, whom he accosted in friendly fashion.

"*Eh bien! mon père*," he said. "I go to join my army. Will you not pray God for us here?"

"*Hé*, Sire," replied the priest, "how could we pray God for you, who are going to a country full of heretics, in order to exterminate the little handful of Catholics who remain there?"

Henri's indomitable good-humour was undisturbed.

"It is zeal," he said, with a laugh, "which carries this good man away, and causes him to speak like this," and proceeded on his way.

Regaining the palace before his wife had reached it and watching her approach from an upper window, he scattered some drops of water on her as she passed below. Meeting her afterwards at the foot of the staircase, he joined in the banquet given to celebrate the event before returning with the Court to the Louvre. And so the long day ended.

CHAPTER XVI

1610

May 14, 1610—Henri and Guise—The King's melancholy—His last hours—His murder—The scene at the Louvre—Sully's ride through Paris—Effect of the murder—Marie declared Regent—Louis XIII. King.

THE history of the tragedy of Friday, May 14, has been often told. Yet, from a narrative of which it is a central and determining event, it cannot be omitted, and the various accounts of contemporaries make it possible to follow the King in detail through the last hours of his life.

He rose that morning after a sleepless night. All through the hours of darkness, as Marie afterwards told the Tuscan envoy, a night-bird had circled round and round the palace, disturbing the inmates with its mournful cries. It was remarked that the King spent a longer time than usual at his devotions; but, though feeling the effects of his wakefulness, he preserved the cheerfulness he had displayed on the preceding day; and as he walked home after hearing Mass at the Feuillants, the Duc de Guise, who, with Bassompierre, had gone to meet him, congratulated him on his wit. He was one of the most amusing men in the world, the Duke said; had he been born in a different sphere of life he would have considered no price too high to pay in order to secure his services. Since he had been made a great King, Guise could not have been aught but his servant.

It was a tribute Henri liked, and he embraced the speaker. His answer showed that the thought of death had not ceased to haunt his imagination.

"You do not know me now," he said, probably between jest and earnest, "but one of these days I shall die, and when you have lost me you will know what I am worth, and how greatly I differ from other men."

Bassompierre, young and light-hearted, took upon himself to chide his master. When, he asked, would the King cease to disquiet his friends by talk of his approaching death? with God's help, he had still many good years of life before him—of a life there was so much to render desirable. The King sighed as he listened to the enumeration of his earthly possessions.

"My friend," he said, "all that must be left behind." The cheerfulness of the morning was gone; his forebodings had presumably gained once more the upper hand.

Returned to the palace, he had his two youngest children, Gaston and Henriette, brought to his apartments and spent some time playing with them, striving, it may be, to dispel his melancholy. It must have seemed causeless enough. All was as usual at the Louvre, and it was noted that the Dauphin was "fort gai" that morning, excited no doubt by the events of the previous day. In the afternoon the Queen retired to rest in her chamber, Louis was taken in his carriage to inspect the preparations made for his mother's *entrée*, and quiet settled over the palace.

That morning Sully had received a summons from the King to meet him at the Tuileries, where he wished to speak with him alone. But the sickness serving as an excuse for his absence from the coronation had been no mere pretext; he was undergoing a course of treatment by means of baths, and when the King learnt the condition in which his messenger had found him he cancelled his orders, forbidding the minister, on the contrary, to leave the house. The next morning, Saturday, he would himself visit the Arsenal at five o'clock, when final arrangements should be made for his departure from Paris on the Monday. A kindly injunction was added to the effect that the Duke was not to be dressed to receive him on his early visit.

Henri, upon second thoughts, must have changed his plans, and, as his friend could not come to the palace, must have determined to seek him at home. Dinner over, he at first attempted to repair the wakefulness of the night; then, unable to sleep, and having again said some prayers, he acted upon the advice of the officer on guard, who counselled him to seek the open air.

Possibly he had forgotten, possibly had decided to disregard, the premonition he had felt of impending calamity, associated with a coach; since he ordered his own to be brought, with the intention of visiting the Arsenal, declining the attendance of Vitry, the captain of the guard, or of his men.

"I want neither you nor your guards," he told him. "I want no one round me."

Even now he wavered, and Ravaillac's opportunity might have been lost.

"*Ma mie*," he said repeatedly to the Queen, "shall I go? shall I not go?" leaving the room two or three times only to return and raise the question again. Then, having at last made up his mind, he kissed Marie more than once, with the longing for the demonstrations of affection so characteristic of him, as he bade her adieu.

"I shall do no more than go and come," he said, "and shall be back immediately."

And so the two parted, for the last time.

Accompanied by Épernon, Montbazon, and some five other courtiers, he quitted the palace. As he entered the coach a recollection of the current prophecies would seem to have recurred to his memory. Turning to one of his companions, he demanded the day of the month.

"To-day is the 15th, Sire," was the reply.

"No," said some one else in correction, "it is the 14th."

"True," answered the King, "you are best acquainted with your almanack"; then, with a laugh, "Between the 13th and the 14th . . . ," he added as he drove away. To what he alluded remains uncertain.

The coach reached the Rue de la Ferronnerie; a cart, blocking the way, obliged the driver to slacken his speed; a man who had been standing before a shop—it was named the "Cœur Couronné percé d'une Flèche"—threw himself upon the King and stabbed him twice.

Accounts as to what followed differed. Some said he spoke ; but only to say "it was nothing." Then his voice died away into silence, and all was over.

The Queen, meanwhile, had been resting from the fatigue of the previous day, the Duchesse de Montpensier her companion. A sound of many trampling feet, reaching her ears, was her first intimation that something unusual had occurred, and her thoughts flying, with swift terror, to the Dauphin, she sent the Duchess to inquire into the cause of the disturbance, awaiting her report with growing anxiety.

"Your son is not dead—it is nothing," said Madame de Montpensier, returning ; but the assurance was given with a countenance so pallid and terror-stricken that, her mistress's fears unallayed, she opened the door of her room and issued forth to make personal investigation.

A scene of horror and confusion confronted her. Two hundred men, with drawn swords, were gathered outside. In the midst of them lay the dead King.

"Oh, Madame," cried Praslin, one of the captains of the guard, as he perceived her, "we are lost."

"Fearing the truth," she afterwards wrote, "I felt my forces fail and should have fallen fainting to the ground had Madame de Montpensier and others of my women not supported me. They brought me back to the couch in my chamber. M. d'Épernon and others sought to comfort me by the assurance that the King, though severely wounded, was not dead, and might recover."

The terrible tidings had quickly reached the Arsenal. Sully had obeyed his master's orders and had remained at home—as those about him remarked, in a melancholy mood—when a cry, raised in the house, startled him in his chamber. The King was not indeed slain, so it was said, but was desperately wounded. All was lost and France ruined—such was the lament of those around. Better than any other, the Duke recognised its truth.

"If he is dead," he said—there was still the doubt—" *s'en est fait*—all is over."

In any case, his place was at his master's side, dead or living, and he prepared to ride to the palace. Bassompierre, appointed by Henri to meet him at the Arsenal, and who had been awaiting him there when the news was brought, was beforehand with the minister. "I ran like a madman," he wrote, "taking the first horse I found, and galloped to the Louvre." Passing the barriers, already closely guarded, he reached the King's chamber, finding the dead man lying upon his bed. M. de Vic, one of the State Council, had placed a cross upon his lips and was speaking to him of God—"lui faisoit souvenir de Dieu." Though doctors surrounded him and surgeons were dressing the wound it was too plain that there was nothing to be done. Life was extinct.

M. le Grand, Grand Equerry, who had entered with Bassompierre, knelt by the bed, holding and kissing one of his master's hands; Bassompierre, flinging himself at his feet, was in tears.

Meantime, as Sully rode towards the palace his train was increasing in numbers, till he was followed by some three hundred horsemen. As he traversed the streets they were filled with a mourning crowd who made no sound, nor uttered, for the most part, any cry, weeping silently, as if stunned by the suddenness of the calamity, the magnitude of which was uncertain. Warning after warning was given Sully significant of the interpretation put, in some quarters at least, upon the deed, viewed not in the light of an isolated crime, but as part of a preconcerted plot. Wariness was enjoined upon the minister with regard to those in whose hands the supreme power would now be placed.

"It is over," thus ran a note thrown to the Duke as he rode by, "I have seen him dead. If you enter the Louvre neither will you escape."

His fears for his master confirmed, great tears fell from Sully's eyes. He was not to be turned back. Dead or alive, he would see the King. Again a warning voice was raised.

"Our ill is beyond remedy," said a gentleman, meeting him; "I know it, for I have looked upon it. Think of yourself, for this blow will have terrible results."

And still Sully pursued his way. At the entrance to the Rue Saint-Honoré a note similar to the first was flung to him; regardless of it, he was continuing to advance when Vitry, captain of the guard, stopping him, threw himself, in broken-hearted fashion, into his arms. The King, their good master, he cried, was dead. France was ruined—there was nothing to do but to die. What was Sully about? Not more than some two or three of his attendants would be permitted to enter the Louvre, and unaccompanied he counselled him not to go thither. There was method in what had been done, or Vitry was mistaken;

"for I have seen those"—he was careful to mention no names—"who have apparently suffered great loss, but who cannot conceal that they are not so sad at heart as they should be. I have been bursting with indignation, and, had you seen what I have seen, you would be enraged." Let Sully go back; there was enough to do without entering the Louvre. And Sully at length consented to turn his horse's head towards the Arsenal, sending a message to the Queen to offer his services and to demand her orders.

At the palace panic had at first prevailed; there, too, it had not been known how far-reaching was the plot of which the assassination might be only a single feature. Repairing to the Queen's presence, the Chancellor and Villeroy took counsel with her as to the immediate steps to be taken.

"The King is dead," cried Marie.

"Pardon me, Madame," replied the Chancellor, "the Kings of France never die. Restrain your tears till you have ensured your own safety and that of your children."

Bassompierre and le Grand had been summoned from their mournful watch by their dead master; the Duke de Guise had been also called into counsel. To Bassompierre orders were given to collect the Light Horse he commanded, and to ride through Paris at their head, thus to quiet tumult and suppress sedition. Le Grand was to remain in charge of the King's body and to guard, should protection prove necessary, the person of the Dauphin.

As Bassompierre executed the commands he had received he encountered Sully; who, having by this time abandoned his intention of seeking the palace, administered an admonition to the younger man with regard to his duty, exhorting him and his comrades to take an oath of fidelity to the new King, and to swear to spend blood and life in avenging his father.

The minister's address, somewhat sententious in tone, did not find favour with Bassompierre, by whom Sully had probably never been liked.

"Monsieur," he answered hotly, "it is we who are administering that oath to others, nor is there any need that we should be exhorted to a thing so binding upon us."

Whereupon Sully, turning away, repaired to the Bastille, where he shut himself up, having provisioned the place with as much bread as could be obtained; dispatching a messenger to his son-in-law, Rohan, to instruct him to march, with the six thousand Swiss he commanded, to Paris. An order which reached him from the Queen to the effect that he should proceed to the Louvre and confer with her upon matters of importance was ignored.

Whether or not Sully was well-advised in testifying his distrust of those in power after a fashion that scarcely admitted of misconception, the fact that Épernon was taking the chief part in the direction of affairs at the Louvre was not calculated to inspire him with confidence. Épernon, the Queen afterwards said, had behaved admirably. He had certainly been prompt and efficient. Henri-Quatre had been murdered at about four o'clock. Before five Marie had been declared Regent, and the new Government had been established. "M. d'Épernon," says Bassompierre, "who, after having given the necessary orders to the French guards before the Louvre"—he was colonel-general of the infantry—"had come to kiss the hands of the King and the Queen his mother, was sent by her to the Parlement, to represent to it that the Queen had letters of Regency from the late King . . . and that the urgency of the affair demanded that it should be settled without delay."

The messenger was well chosen. Repairing to the Augustines, where the Parlement was then sitting, Épernon executed the Queen's behests.

"It is still in the scabbard," he said insolently, as he indicated his sword. "Should the Queen not be declared Regent before the assembly disperses, it must be drawn, and I foresee that blood will be shed." It was no time for deliberation. The thing must be done without delay.

Taken by surprise, the Parlement maintained at first a gloomy silence. They were required to give their consent to an unprecedented arrangement, in conferring supreme power upon the Queen alone, to the exclusion of Princes of the Blood and officers of the Crown. But in the end they yielded, and, Épernon having left the hall in order to give the semblance of greater freedom to their decision, it was resolved to do Marie's bidding and declare her Regent during the minority of her son. Not only was she to rule; by the words "avec toute puissance et autorité," her power was made absolute.

The fear lest the murder should prove part of a wide-spread conspiracy may have accelerated the movements of the Parlement: there were no grounds for the apprehension. Paris remained quiet, nor was there any sign of riot or disorder. Louis was King. As the tidings of the catastrophe spread, he had been hurried back to the palace, breaking into weeping, and exclaiming that, had he been with his father, he would have slain the murderer with his sword. That evening he was served by his attendants on their knees. Surprised by the novelty, he first gave a laugh; then, as the significance of the ceremonial became apparent to him, burst into tears.

"I would I were not King," he cried. "I would it were my brother. I fear they will kill me, as they have killed the King, my father."

Little Orléans, hardly more than three, whom Louis would have liked to take his place, had shown a spirit beyond his years; asking for a dagger, and crying out that he would not outlive his *papa*. The Queen described the scene at her dinner-table, and the story leaked out and was repeated in Paris; where it was also said that astrologers predicted a great future for the second son of the dead King; he would succeed his brother, and would avenge his father, as he was ever speaking of doing. He was likewise to be the Pope's foe—to ruin Rome and to drive his Holiness out of it. Which, being repeated to his mother, she said that, did God give her life, she would prevent this prediction from coming to pass.

When Louis—reported not to be of so high a spirit as his brother, though generous and soldierly—was undressed that night and prepared for bed, he begged to be permitted to sleep with M. de Souvré.

"Lest dreams should come to me," he said fearfully.

Lest dreams should come. Surely, throughout his life, the memory of that fourteenth of May, and of the dead father he loved so well, will have haunted his imagination like a nightmare.

His request was granted, and in the room of the *gouverneur* he slumbered till past eleven, when the Queen, anxious to have all her children under her eye, sent to fetch him to her chamber, where his brothers and sisters were gathered together, closely guarded. It is to be noted, as a curious trait of kindness on her part towards the son of the woman who had wrought her so much ill, that Marie directed that Henri de Verneuil, who had borne Louis company, should be likewise brought to her apartments, thus associating him with her care for her own children.

For Marie, as for her son, a fresh period of life had been opened by the King's death. Into the much-debated question of the complicity or connivance of more important personages in Ravaillac's crime there is no space to enter at length. Theories are numerous; hypotheses abound; and it would take a volume to deal with them in any complete fashion. The suggestion has been hazarded that, apart from the murderer and destitute of any collusion with him, a conspiracy existed which might have done the work had he failed to accomplish it, in which Épernon, the Marquise, and others were implicated. What is certain is that there were many to whose designs Henri was an obstacle, and to whom he barred the way to success. To Spain, he was the one great opponent of her ambitious schemes. To adherents of the ancient faith he represented, his personal Catholicism notwithstanding, the leader and chief support of the Protestant party in Europe. Madame de Verneuil will have bitterly resented his defection. His wife had little reason to mourn him. To her favourites his death left the road to unlimited wealth and power open. But the fact that any person was benefited by the crime is no proof that they lent a hand to compass it; and other evidence of their guilt must be sought.

Neither is the sentence dictated by popular prejudice conclusive. Upon the Jesuits, for instance, disliked and distrusted, suspicion could not fail to fall; and the tone of Lestoile's journal in itself is sufficient to indicate the view taken in the capital. "Père Cotton," he writes, "with a truly courtier-like and Jesuitical exclamation, cried, 'Who is the villain who has slain this good prince, this holy King, this great King? Was it a Huguenot?' 'No,' was the answer, 'it was a Roman Catholic.' 'Ah! what pity if it be so,' he said, signing himself immediately, in Jesuit fashion, with three great signs of the cross. A voice was audible, coming from some one present who had heard Père Cotton's question, saying, 'The Huguenots do not strike these blows.'"

How wide-spread was the implied accusation charging the Society with complicity in the murder, is curiously proved by a scene taking place in the house of the Comte de Soissons; when the Prince, in the presence of from twenty to thirty guests, threatened to stab the first of them bold enough to assert that the Order had been instrumental in procuring the King's death. He was aware, he added, that this was language common in the mouths of many; the first who should venture to use it in his presence should lose his life.

Suspicion, however wide-spread, is far from being evidence, and the question whether the assassin was a mere religious maniac, acting upon his sole initiative, in delivering, as he believed, the Church from her chief foe, or an instrument in the hands of others has never been satisfactorily determined. Ravaillac, whose avowal would have solved the mystery once for all, uttered no word, under torture or otherwise, that could elucidate it. He incriminated none. A passage of M. Zeller's—than whom no man is more qualified to pronounce an opinion—may be accepted as summarising the whole matter :

" All has been said with regard to the death of Henri-Quatre ; we will not repeat it. Whatever may be the mystery enveloping this fatal event, and however little belief may be accorded to vague or ill-founded theories, it can be said that Spain profited by the King's death, and that it secured the triumph of Marie de Medicis's personal policy, favourable to that Power. Further than this no document authorises us to go." [1]

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[1] " Henri IV. et Marie de Medicis," p. 309.

CHAPTER XVII

1610

Louis's Accession—The scene in the Parlement—Sully at the Louvre—The Queen as Regent—The King's fears—Claims of the Comte de Soissons—Burial of Henri-Quatre—Louis proclaimed.

LOUIS was King. He might as yet be a cipher; he was a cipher upon which hung the destinies of France. Yesterday he had been of practical importance to none save his immediate surroundings; to-day the eyes of the whole nation were fixed upon him.

In the early morning of May 15 he was awakened that he might be prepared to play his part in the ceremonial of the day; and before he rose M. de Souvré had instructed him in the speech he was to make to the assembled Parlement, which was to be asked to confirm the hurried decree of the previous day, and formally to declare the Queen-mother Regent.

Nobles and princes and officers of State had collected at the palace, preparatory to accompanying the new King to the Augustines. As the boy rode through the streets, surrounded by his brilliant escort and mounted on a little white nag, the youth and helplessness of the fatherless child appealed to the throng, and shouts of "Vive le roi!" greeted him on every side. Bewildered and confused, he listened to the cries.

"Who is the King?" he asked, turning to one of his attendants. "Who is the King?"

All was accomplished according to the Queen's most sanguine anticipations. By a singular chance—fortunate so far as she was concerned—two of the three Princes of the Blood were absent from Paris. Condé was at a distance; Soissons was also in the country. Conti was a nonentity. No one was at hand of sufficient weight to contest the claim of the King's mother to be invested with undivided authority. It has been seen that Epernon had set himself with passion to vindicate her claims. Sully, in default of the necessary support, was powerless to oppose them; and, having reluctantly yielded obedience to reiterated summonses from the Queen, he assisted, sad at heart, at the inauguration of what he knew too well would prove the ruin of the labours of a life-time.

The ceremony was decorously carried through. Louis was seated on the throne; his mother—an empty space between them—at his right hand. Souvré knelt on the steps below, and the great nobles were ranged on either side. Amid the silence of the expectant crowd the Queen opened the proceedings, pronouncing her speech with difficulty, her voice broken by sobs, and shedding great tears, "irreproachable witnesses of her inward mourning for her dear and well-beloved husband." Her speech concluded, she made as though she would have withdrawn; then, yielding to the entreaties of those present, resumed her place; whilst her son, "with truly royal grace and gravity," addressed the great assembly.

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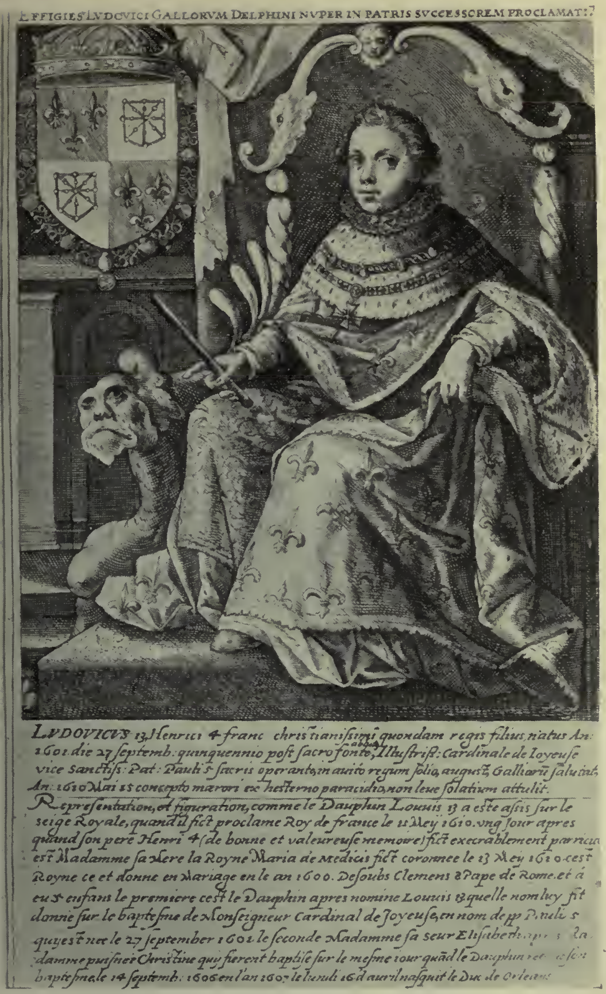

EFFIGIES LVDOVICI GALLORVM DELPHINI NVPER IN PATRIS SVCCESSOREM PROCLAMATI.

LVDOVICVS 13 Henrici 4 franc christianiſsimi quondam regis filius, natus An:
1601. die 27 ſeptemb: quinquennio poſt ſacro fonte ablutꝰ, Illuſtriſs: Cardinale de Ioyeuſe
vice Sanctiſs: Pat: Pauli 5 ſacris operante, in auito regum ſolio, auguſt. Galliarũ ſalutat.
An: 1610 Mai 15 concepto mærori ex heſterno parricidio, non leue ſolatium attulit.

Repreſentation, et figuration, comme le Dauphin Louis 13 a eſte aſsis ſur le
ſeige Royale, quand il fict proclame Roy de france le 15 Mey 1610. vng Jour apres
quand ſon pere Henri 4 (de bonne et valeureuſe memoire) fict execrablement parric
eſt Madamme ſa Mere la Royne Maria de Medicis fict coronnee le 13 Mey 1610. ceſt
Royne ce et donne en Mariage en le an 1600. Deſoubs Clemens 8 Pape de Rome. et á
eu 5 enfans le premiere ceſt le Dauphin apres nomine Louis 13 quelle nom luy fit
donne ſur le bapteſme de Monſeigneur Cardinal de Joyeuſe, en nom de pp Pauli 5
qui eſt nee le 27 ſeptember 1601 le ſeconde Madamme ſa ſeur Eliſabeth [illegible] la-
damme puiſnee Christine quy fierent baptiſe ſur le meſme iour quãd le Dauphin [illegible] ſon
bapteſme le 14 ſeptemb: 1606 en l'an 1607 le lundi 16 d auril naſquit le Duc de Orleans

LOUIS XIII. ON THE DAY OF HIS ACCESSION.

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"Messieurs," he said, "it has pleased God to call to Himself our good King, my lord and father. I remain, as his son and by the law of this realm, your King. I hope that God will give me grace to imitate his virtues and to follow the good counsels of my good servants, as the Chancellor will tell you."

Sully, listening mournfully to the little set harangue, will have told himself, as he told others, that Henri's death was rather a sign that the Almighty had determined upon the destruction of France. If those were present who secretly agreed with him no dissentient voice was raised. The decree already promulgated received formal confirmation; and the Queen was declared Regent. One short passage of arms, not without significance, interrupted the proceedings. At a certain stage in them, Concini observed aloud that it was time for the Queen to leave her place.

"It is not for you to speak here," said the first President, Harlay, in stern rebuke. It was soon to be seen that it would be difficult to limit the insolence of the man the Queen delighted to honour.

Amidst the tearful acclamations of the crowd Louis rode homewards. The King's words, spoken on the morning of the day which saw his murder, had come true. The people, now that he was gone, knew what they had lost. Living, they might have found much to condemn. Dead, says Michelet, "the people perceived that they loved Henri-Quatre."

The old order of things, with the rapidity of a flash of lightning, had been swept away; the new, in four-and-twenty hours, was definitely established.

Yet a scene taking place that afternoon might have seemed to promise well for the future. Sully, conquering his reluctance to enter the Louvre in its present condition, overcoming also, it may be, some lingering apprehension as to the risk he might thereby incur, had come thither at length to wait upon the Queen in deference to her command. As he entered the building, unaccompanied save by his personal attendants, the inferior officers of the royal household, the archers and soldiers of the guard, vied with each other in doing honour to their dead master's favoured servant, recognising and welcoming in him a fellow mourner. Many amongst those of higher rank, on the other hand, were observed to be in no wise cast down, but on the contrary of cheerful countenance.

The Duke was cordially received by the Queen. Mingling her tears with his, she sent for Louis, and admonished him dramatically to love the man who had been one of his father's best servants. As Sully held the boy in his close embrace it may be that, for a moment, he cherished the hope that, as he had served the father, so he might be permitted to serve the son. He was to be speedily undeceived.

The long day—the first of Louis's reign—was drawing to a close. In the mortuary chamber to which he had been removed the dead King lay. The night before he had been served, in accordance with the strange ritual prescribed by tradition, as he had been accustomed to be served in his life-time. The Duc de Mayenne had given him his shirt; Bellegarde, Grand Equerry, and Bassompierre, representing the

Duc de Bouillon, had assisted at the ghastly ceremony. A deputation composed of twelve Jesuits now waited, first upon Louis, then upon his mother, to proffer, on behalf of their Society, their services ; and, further, to advance their claim to the heart of Henri, which they asserted he had bequeathed as his legacy to the Order. Varenne, high in the late King's confidence, corroborated their statement, and the relic was accordingly delivered over to them, to be carried to La Flèche. And so the reign of Louis XIII. was inaugurated.

The days went by. As in Paris and in France, so at the Louvre, genuine sorrow and conventional mourning—covering and disguising satisfaction—confronted and jostled each other. In the State apartments all the pomp and paraphernalia of woe were displayed. Sable hangings draped the walls ; the decencies of desolation were carefully observed. Yet in the very chants of the requiems it was noticed that, whilst the voices of some of the choristers were broken with sobs, others found no difficulty in showing off their powers to the best advantage. In the *entre-sol* below the muted chambers, life was carried on as usual. To the indignation of the few faithful to the memory of the past, laughter echoed through the rooms where Marie held secret converse with the men who enjoyed her confidence—Concini and his wife, the papal nuncio, Epernon, the Spanish Ambassador, Villeroy, and others. The accredited Council of State might hold its deliberations elsewhere ; but the Queen-mother—hitherto almost a negligible quantity in politics—ruled supreme ;

her will was law. Such was the strange transformation effected by Ravaillac's knife.

To Marie de Medicis all must have had at first somewhat of the unreality of a dream. It is only possible to guess at the sentiments underlying her decent assumption of woe during these early days of widowhood. Setting aside as unproved the dark suspicions that connected her directly or indirectly with the catastrophe, it may be that she has been too harshly judged; that, with little to attract or to command sympathy or admiration, harder measure has been meted out to her than might have been the case with a woman of a more winning character. As was perhaps inevitable, in the face of her conduct before and after her husband's death, the populace and others insisted on associating her name with that of the man she had so unwisely favoured, and regarded Concini as her lover. Of this, again, there is no proof; but in her blemished reputation she received the deserts of her blind infatuation for the Florentine couple.

For the rest, human nature is full of contradictions, and it may be that her mourning for the dead King was not wholly a tribute to the requirements of convention. Regret does not infrequently follow upon the severance of a tie that has seemed to give scanty cause for it; the prosperous can afford to be pitiful; and, with the future opening before her, crowded with possibilities she rated at their full value, she may have been touched at times by tenderness or compassion for the dead man now powerless to wrong her; may have remembered that, in spite of his weakness, his infirmities, and his sins, he was, as she once told the Tuscan envoy, "di dolce natura," and have not been totally devoid of affectionate remembrance.

That it would be unreasonable, as well as idle, to look for more genuine sorrow, posterity will readily admit ; but the fact was not so easily acknowledged by those to whom Henri had been master and friend, the object, in spite of all his shortcomings, of their deepest love and devotion. Of these Sully was chief. Recalling, in after-days, the period following upon the King's death, full of melancholy, and weighted with the sense of irreparable loss, the Duke afterwards drew a picture of the Queen as she then appeared, in which the reader cannot fail to discover, beneath the language of the courtier, the bitterness of sarcasm.

Dwelling, in the first place, in terms of perfunctory and highly coloured panegyric, upon her outward charms, her industry and skill in winning hearts, her magnanimity and constancy in the endurance of sorrow and trouble, he proceeded to dilate upon her conduct at this crisis, bereft in a moment of her dearest delights in the companionship, love, and society of a husband for whose loss it must not be doubted—Sully had it on good authority—she felt all the grievous and acute regret corresponding to the greatness of that loss.

So far, notwithstanding the exaggeration of his praise, little in accordance with Sully's custom, the description might have come from the pen of her husband's friend, sincerely convinced that she was a fellow-mourner. In what follows the irony breaks through its thin disguise. So different, he goes on to say, are appearances often from reality, that, surmounting all grief and subduing the violence of her sufferings, she allowed no sign of them to appear in public, forcing her eyes to restrain their tears, and, the more to conceal her desolation, curbing her inclination to seek those places of sadness and melancholy where alone she could find pleasure, and remaining almost all day with Court and Council in a decorated chamber glittering with gold and silver and purple; where she was compelled to listen to outbursts of laughter and shouts of rejoicing from those who hoped to profit by the calamity. To all she was an object of admiration, owing to the control she exercised over her suffering spirit, scarcely a trace of it appearing in countenance or words.

Whilst his mother passed her days in the fashion thus indicated, the shock of his father's murder had produced upon the imagination of the little King an effect not easily effaced, and he continued to be haunted by the suggestion it contained of danger to himself. Taken to church on Sunday, he directed the guards by whom he was accompanied to place themselves on either side of his carriage, appealing to them to attend to their duty.

"Guard me well," he would entreat, "lest they should kill me as they have killed the King, my father."

At night, too, dreams of assassination would visit the nervous child; and, waking, he would fall into reveries attracting the attention of his attendants.

"C'est que je songeois," he told his nurse, when she strove to rouse him from one of these fits of abstraction. Then, after another pause, "Doundoun, it is that I would that the King, my father, had lived for twenty years. Ah, the *méchant* who killed him!" "I wish"—he said another time wistfully to Madame de Montglat—"I wish I had not so soon become King, and that the King, my father, were still alive."

It was not unnatural that fears for his personal safety should have clouded the child's mind and mingled with less selfish regrets. Not only was Paris pervaded by a curious terror, as if the murder had affected men's nerves; but—a common result of a notorious crime—others had been, so to speak, fired by Ravaillac's example, and had been set musing on like achievements. A knife bearing the inscription, "I will do it in my turn," was found in the possession of a freemason said to be in communication with the Archduke. A soldier belonging to the palace guard, rendered reckless by losses at the gaming-table, was heard to boast that, had Henri not been already dead, he would have slain both King and Queen; and a comrade was arrested on the charge of having declared, pointing to Louis, that he wished his dagger were in the heart of the last of the race.

Stories such as these—due probably to the vagaries of drunkards or of madmen whose diseased imagination had been coloured by the event which was in all men's mouths—may easily, coming to the ears of the boy, have caused him to ponder anxiously over the dangers he ran as he played as usual with his toys, or took his place, with a gravity and patience surprising to foreign ambassadors, at his mother's side, giving audience to envoys and nobles, and sharing with decorum in the pageantry of State.

However well he might perform his part, the services of the soothsayers who were so busily plying their trade would not have been necessary to enable an observer to predict coming trouble under the new system of government. It is true that, in the initiation of her rule, Marie de Medicis took those who watched her by surprise, and displayed qualities for which few would have given her credit, exhibiting an energy and determination not to be expected from a woman so little experienced in the transaction of public business. But that very determination and energy could not fail to bring her into conflict with others claiming to exercise an influence in public affairs. Having attained the summit of her ambition and possessing supreme power in the State, she did not intend to barter it for ease or tranquillity, nor to act the part—as she told the Comte de Soissons plainly—of a mere Madame de Montglat, charged with the care of her son's person and leaving it to others to steer the vessel. Marie de Medicis meant to rule.

There were, however, obstacles in the way of the accomplishment of her purpose. The attitude assumed by Soissons himself, who had hurried back to the capital on receiving tidings of the catastrophe, and the concessions he had wrung from her, was an earnest of the difficulties with which a woman wholly unused to the conduct of weighty affairs or to the management of men would be forced to contend. Professing, with tears, his loyalty to the Queen and her son, the Count had at once advanced a demand to be made the King's Lieutenant-General throughout the realm, and, though Marie was resolute in her refusal to accede to his desire, she unwisely sought to propitiate him by the post of Governor of Normandy, usually held by the Dauphin, and vacated by Louis's accession to the throne; his son was promised the government of Dauphiny, and large sums of money were allotted for the payment of his debts.

The result was at once apparent. Condé had not had time to return from Milan, where the news had found him ; but Conti, Soissons's elder brother, was enraged, and Guise, with all the house of Lorraine, took the Prince's part with so much violence that it was necessary to keep the palace guard under arms, lest discontent should burst into open violence. Paris, moreover, always an uncertain factor in party strife, was soon to develop a causeless and disquieting liking for Condé, chief of the Princes of the Blood.

Meantime, whilst the struggle for the sceptre he had dropped went on, Henri-Quatre lay unburied. On June 25 the first ceremony connected with his obsequies took place ; and, having been taken to the Hôtel de Longueville at midday, Louis walked back in procession to the Louvre, to sprinkle his father's body with holy water as it lay in state in the lower hall of the palace.

As he passed on, the central figure in the pageant, dressed in purple and the long train of his hooded cloak borne by the Princes of the Blood, it was observed that, though his little brothers, terrified by the funeral array, never ceased sobbing, he did not shed a tear.

Yet the impression stamped upon the boy's mind by the ceremony was shown by his entreaty when, a year or two later, little Orléans had gone to join his father, that he might not be obliged to perform a similar office by him.

Four days afterwards the body of the King was removed from the palace on its way to his place of sepulture, the occasion being disgraced by brawls within the precincts of the Louvre itself, which testified to the absence of discipline and authority reigning there.

"The body of the late King was to be taken away," records Héroard with graphic simplicity. "There was much dissension amongst the hundred gentlemen and the bodyguard, who nearly came to blows. The King comes out on to a balcony leading from the small staircase to the great hall, and looks on for more than half an hour at what was doing in the courtyard. His guide [*sic*] was told of it, and he is removed. M. de Gondi, Bishop of Paris, disputes precedence with the Court of Parlement; the Court at last pushes him in front. The body leaves the Louvre at half-past six; arrives at nine at Notre Dame."

On the following day the body of Henri-Quatre was borne to his last resting-place amongst the Kings of France at Saint-Denis.

"The King is dead. Pray God for his soul!" the herald cried in mournful accents from the vault to which the body was lowered, and, as the proclamation was heard, almost all present were moved to tears. Then, from the same herald, still below, rose the cry, "Long live Louis XIII., King, by the grace of God, of France and of Navarre." Caught up by a second voice in the choir above, the words were greeted by a blare of trumpets and fifes, with the beating of drums, and all was over.

The King was dead. Much had died with him. The wise administration, the great reign, of Henri-Quatre was over. France was to be, to use Michelet's phrase, "retournée comme un gant."

CHAPTER XVIII

1610

Rival forces in the State—Condé's return—Louis and his *gouverneur*—His position and training—Unlikeness to his father—His love for him—Pierrot at Court.

THE reversal of the late King's policy was the natural and inevitable result of the Queen's supremacy. Italian by blood, Spanish in sympathy, dominated by Tuscan favourites to whom France was merely a means of fortune and rank, the welfare of the country could not fail to be subordinated to her personal interests and tastes—tastes and interests in almost every respect differing from those of Henri-Quatre.

In setting to work to carry out the projects she had at heart, Marie de Medici probably under-estimated the difficulties she would encounter, indulging that happy confidence in her own powers and capabilities commonly found in those who have never been called upon to put them to a practical test. She had to learn that the art of government does not consist alone in the possession of a strong will and a determination to rule. To command is one thing; to enforce obedience is another and a harder matter.

The management of the forces at work in France during the period following upon Henri's death

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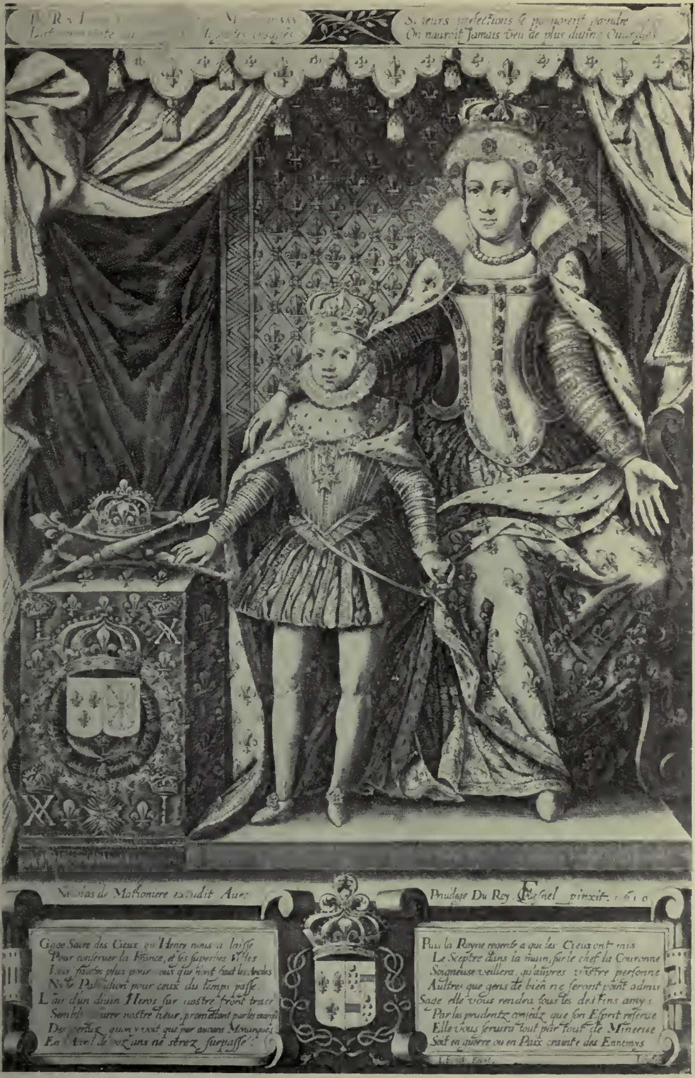
Si leurs perfections se pouvoient paindre
On nauroit Jamais veu de plus divins Ouvrages
Nicolas de Mathoniere excudit Avec
Privilege Du Rey. F. Quesnel pinxit. 1610
Gage Sacre des Cieux qu'Henry nous a laissé
Pour conserver la France, et ses superbes Villes
Pour conserver la France, et ses superbes Villes
Pour nous plus pour nous que n'ont faict les Achilles
Ny le Palladion pour ceux du temps passé.
L'air d'un divin Heros sur vostre front tracé
Semble asseurer nostre heur, promettant par les marques
Des vertus qu'on y voit que par aucuns Monarques
En l'Avril de voz ans ne serez surpassé.
Puis la Royne regente a qui les Cieux ont mis
Le Sceptre dans la main, sur le chef la Couronne
Soigneuse veillera, qu'aupres vostre personne
Autres que gens de bien ne seront point admis
Sage elle vous rendra tous les destins amys
Par les prudentz conseilz que son Esprit reserve
Elle vous servira tout par tout de Minerve
Soit en guerre ou en Paix crainte des Ennemys

From an engraving by Nicolas de Mathoniere, after a painting by F. Quesnel.

LOUIS XIII. AND THE REGENT MARIE DE MEDICIS.

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he come as a friend or an enemy? The question was at least provisionally answered on July 16, when at six o'clock in the evening he entered Paris, attended by some two hundred horsemen, and met, with the Queen's permission, by the Duc de Bellegarde and the Duc d'Épernon, each with a considerable train. The windows of the houses, as he rode through the streets, were crowded with spectators. He had left Paris a fugitive, almost a rebel. He returned in triumph; stopping on his way to visit Saint-Denis and have Mass said there for the man who had, in effect, driven him forth. And so, peace having been made with his vanquished enemy, he entered the capital.

At the Louvre he was anxiously awaited. As the little King noted the crowd that went forth to meet his cousin the old spirit of jealousy awakened within him. Was the Chevalier de Vendôme also going? he inquired as he accorded permission to some other of his household who had come to ask it; receiving the Chevalier's contemptuous disclaimer of any such intention with manifest satisfaction. "You give me pleasure when you speak like that," he told him.

All was ready for the Prince, whether he came in amity or in hostility. The oath had been administered afresh to the marshals; the captains of the guard had been enjoined to take no orders save from the King, the Queen, or their own colonels; the citizens had been directed to arm. Precautions proved unnecessary. Without waiting so much as to change his dress, the Prince repaired to the palace, and was there received by the King and his mother. In the presence of a throng of courtiers, he bent the knee so low that some said it had touched the ground, and was embraced twice over by both. The formal meeting over, the Queen led the way into her private chamber and there continued for a few minutes in converse with him, Soissons, Vendôme and the few who had been admitted remaining discreetly out of earshot; with the exception of the Cardinal de Sourdis, who approached the speakers more closely.

"Go and tell that Prince of your blood to take himself off," said Soissons, jesting, to Vendôme, connected with the Cardinal through his mother.

The interview over, Marie directed the Prince to go and unboot himself and to return to the palace. That night, as first Prince of the Blood, he gave the King his shirt. The fears he had roused were allayed. The Queen was at least to be permitted to take breath before being called upon to grapple with the leader of the rival forces in the State.

With the dead King, the single figure possessing intrinsic greatness, or making an appeal to the imagination, had passed from the French stage. Amongst those who remain, Sully excepted, it is difficult to discover any single character commanding admiration or respect; and this fact should be taken into account in considering the position of the new sovereign. His father gone—great, in spite of his littleness—there seems to have been none near to whom Louis would naturally have looked up.

From first to last he was indeed singularly unfortunate in this respect. Few there were he could respect, few whom he could love. Whether or not, in childhood, he loved his mother is difficult to determine. Even between mother and son a barrier was interposed by court etiquette. Signs of tenderness on her part appear to have been rare, since Balzac was told by a courtier that, during the four years covered by the Regency, she had never once kissed him. The statement may or may not have been accurate ; in any case that it should have been credible is significant of the terms existing between the two. True affection, however, may be combined with a minimum of demonstration, and it should be remembered that Henri would charge his wife in jest, with being the least caressing of women. Of her solicitude concerning her son's health and safety there can be no question. He was constantly under her own eye, and, from the time of his father's murder, slept in her bedchamber. But she was a stern woman, and the severity of her discipline, coupled with the absence of signs of affection, was not calculated to endear her to the victim.

With regard to others, it has been seen that Louis's training at Saint-Germain had not been of a sort to foster the habit of respect for lawful authority ; nor in his relations with his *gouverneur* is much trace of amendment to be found. If he yielded him obedience it was rather because it was enforced by the rod than from more worthy reasons ; and there were outbreaks of insolence on the boy's part indicative of an undercurrent of dislike kept in check by fear. Nor does Souvré appear to have been a man to inspire respect. It is true that the editors of Héroard's journal point with satisfaction to his condemnation of a coarse expression used by one of Louis's boy companions ;

but though he may have been strict as to manners, the nature of the influence he was likely to exert in matters of taste and morality may be inferred from a conversation on the subject of certain songs the boy had caused to be sung to him; the *gouverneur* inquiring whether he had not called for those commemorating his dead father's loves for the Princesse de Condé and others.

"No," replied Louis, adding brusquely, pressed for his reasons, "I do not like them."

He had an instinctive distaste—singular when the fashion of his bringing up and the customs of the day are remembered—for coarseness.

"Ouy les vilaines!" he said, turning his back with a look of anger on Concini, who had hazarded a jest of the kind. "Serium et pudiceum responsum," wrote Héroard approvingly, as he noted the occurrence.

If Souvré was not a man to fall into the mistake made by the Italian in outraging his charge's natural instincts of refinement, trifling incidents constantly prove the unsatisfactory nature of their relationship. Thus Louis is found taking a seat beside the *gouverneur* with the sole object of forcing him, in deference to court etiquette, to rise; Souvré's irritation, on the repetition of the trick, showing that he divined and resented its motive.

"You have come to make me stand up," he told the boy; "but I shall not do it, for all that."

"You should not equal yourself to me," replied Louis, loftily if inapropos.

"You have your hat on," he told Souvré sharply on another occasion.

"Yes, and I shall not take it off to you now," answered the *gouverneur*, with an undignified display of temper. "It is not that I do not know what I owe you, which is a thousand times more. You can complain to the Queen."

Frequently the same lack of cordiality is apparent.

"One would have to be a great fool to believe that," returned Louis, with contemptuous insolence, when his inquiries as to Souvré's skill as a marksman had elicited what sounded like a boast. Nor would he, another time, mount his horse, lest the *gouverneur* should ride his second nag.

If Souvré had failed to win the affections of his charge, Louis displayed a certain liking for his tutor, Des Yveteaux. Yet, though he may have condoned his shortcomings, it would seem that he had detected and taxed him with them; for, put upon his defence, the tutor is found observing, with manifest acrimony, that though he might not be amongst the most learned, neither was he common or vulgar, or he would not have held his present position.

Saint-Simon asserts that the boy was kept purposely ignorant. The charge is unsupported. As he grew older, the Queen, anxious to retain the direction of affairs, may have discouraged him from taking an interest in serious business. But he was steadily, if not rigorously, compelled to apply himself to his studies; and if Des Yveteaux was not a competent instructor, it was Henri-Quatre, and not his wife, who had chosen him for the post.

Looked at from almost any point of view, the fate of a child who is an important asset in a great game of hazard is a melancholy one. It was the obvious interest of those in power to exclude from Louis's life all ties of intimacy or affection liable to endanger their personal supremacy in the future—to narrow, in the words of Saint-Simon, his prison and render him more and more inaccessible to others. At the same time, and somewhat inconsistently, his childhood was relentlessly shortened. He loved toys and playthings—save in the matter of hunting and painting he was, in the words of a contemporary observer, "enfant, enfantissime." Again and again Souvré is found reproaching him with his childishness ; and on one occasion, reluctantly assenting to the justice of the *gouverneur's* reproofs, he made up his cherished possessions into a package, to be handed over to his little brother. Childish games were also, if not forbidden, discouraged by Souvré, and Louis bowed to the decision.

"But one must do something," he added, rather pitifully. "Tell me what to do, and I will do it."

This, it is true, was a year later ; but his father was no sooner dead than it was the endeavour of those in authority that he should leave childhood behind.

"They want to make a man of him," reported the Tuscan Secretary, Scipione Ammirato, "and as he has many little children of his own age as companions, they wish to remove them, which will annoy him very much at first, as he has been used to amuse himself with them."

Marie de Medicis, one would have thought, had little reason to desire to curtail the period of her supremacy ; yet she told him, one evening as he was being put to bed, that she wished she could pull out his arms and legs so as to make him grow faster.

"*À quoi bon?*" answered Louis, with precocious wisdom, "since my mind would not grow at the same time."

Already he was treated as if his voice was of weight in the conduct of affairs; already, also, he was learning caution in the expression of his opinion. The young Duc de Rohan, taking leave of him before joining the forces sent—with a show of carrying out the late King's intentions—to assist the Protestant princes in gaining possession of Cleves and Juliers, asked for a message to take to the Commander-in-Chief.

"Tell him to do the best he can," was the boy's reply, wisely vague.

"But, Sire," persisted the questioner—he was Sully's son-in-law, and would have his heart in the fight—"is it your pleasure that he should give battle?"

Louis still refused to commit himself to a definite opinion.

"Let him do the best he can," he repeated.

He may have shrewdly divined that his pleasure would have little to do with the operations to be carried on in the field. Clear-sighted and sagacious, in spite of the incense habitually offered him, he was not easily taken in by flattery. When his tutor instructed him, in courtly fashion, that, according to Plato, the gods were above Kings in the same way that Kings were above other men, he was quick to point out the difference.

"There is only one God," he answered sharply, "there are many Kings"; and again, a passage in a

Roman newspaper having been read aloud to him commending his own intelligence and gifts, he put the suggestion that he should hear it a second time impatiently aside. To himself words did not come easily. "You know very well that I am not a great talker"—*grand parleur*—he said, when M. de Souvré would complain of his lack of admiration for what was beautiful.

Of his rank, of his station, of the respect due to him, he thought much; there is no evidence that he over-estimated himself personally; and he detected, with some humour, the emptiness of the outward tokens of reverence paid him. He would rather have fewer obeisances and not be whipped, he observed, corporal punishment having been administered by his mother's orders, the Queen afterwards receiving him with the exaggerated signs of deference she never failed to show.

Not only at Rome, but elsewhere, the gifts, character, and tendencies of the little King were discussed with interest by those they might in the future affect. Cioli, the Florentine envoy, sent home minute accounts. Though Louis might outwardly resemble his mother, it was the Italian's opinion that he displayed a likeness in other ways to his dead father. Héroard, with more opportunities for forming a judgment, thought the same. Yet, save in a boy's natural leaning towards outdoor pursuits, hunting or hawking, the absence of any inclination to idleness, his indefatigable energy, and a liking for warlike games and lead soldiers, it is difficult to see where the similarity lay.

A certain dignity of demeanour, quiet and cold, remarkable in so young a child, was certainly not inherited from Henri-Quatre. He could show himself capable of keeping order, and of making his authority felt; and voices having been unduly raised in the presence-chamber on one occasion, he told the nobles who filled it to make less noise, and his command was obeyed.

"*Eh bien!* M. le Cardinal de Sourdis," he said another time, his eminence, on entering, having made obeisance only to the Queen, "you look upon me, then, as a child?"

Nor were these incidents mere accidents. A scene taking place a year or two later shows that the tendency they indicated was growing to be a settled purpose. Souvré, when the boy was to go for a drive, had inquired whom he wished to share his carriage? "The King makes no reply. Asked the same question several times, still the same silence. M. de Souvré says at last, 'Sire, here is M. de la Force, captain of the guard. Is it your pleasure that he should enter?' The King says not a word. 'Sire, the captains of your guard used to do this in the time of the late King, your father.' 'They accustomed themselves to do it, little by little. Little by little, I will make them lose the habit.'" Such was the boy's reply.

The anecdote presents him in a light contrasting curiously with the careless friendliness of Henri's bearing towards his servants; though the line he took up in this particular instance may have been partly explained by the instinctive craving for a certain amount of solitude which he had already shown.

Like or unlike his father, the love he had borne him was not quickly forgotten. More than a year after Henri's death—a year crowded with new interests and excitement—he was listening, with the Duc de Vendôme, to music, a song alluding to the late King having been chosen. At the words—

Dessous la loi
D'un si grand roi—

Louis turned away in tears. Vendôme, too, was weeping.

Notwithstanding his capacity for strong attachments, he had hitherto displayed little preference for any person about the Court, with the exception of the younger Vendôme brother. The Chevalier he loved, and though, in the course of the summer following upon his father's death, Alexandre was to have gone to join his brother in Brittany, Louis wept so bitterly that the arrangement was cancelled. His own little brothers and sisters remained at Saint-Germain, and meetings were comparatively rare. That he clung to the memory of the childish years passed at the château was shown when, one August day, a peasant lad named Pierrot, with whom he had then been accustomed to play, suddenly appeared at the Tuileries, where Louis was standing, surrounded by courtiers, watching the pond.

Pierrot, it seemed, had made his way from Saint-Germain to Paris with the express purpose of visiting "M. le Dauphin," and bringing him a gift of some sparrows. Recognising his old playmate, Louis ran up to the boy, threw his arms round him and kissed him.

Proper clothes, he said, should be given him, and he should remain at Court. The boy, however, declined the proffered honour. He must go home; otherwise he would be beaten, for his father and mother had not been willing that he should go to Paris to see M. le Dauphin; and Louis, who had doubtless hoped to secure a playfellow, had no alternative but to let him go.

Such was the boy—a mixture of sagacity, precocious knowledge of the world, reserve, pride, coldness, self-consciousness, and childishness—who, at eight years old, was deprived of the guidance and authority of his father, and left to the care of Marie de Medicis and the counsellors she gathered about her.

CHAPTER XIX

1610–11

Policy of the Government—Unrest in Paris—Concini dominant—The Duke de Feria's mission—The King's coronation—Louis and Condé—Sully's dismissal—Rumours of war.

THE coronation of Louis XIII. was to take place in October. Meantime the views of those administering the government in his name were becoming increasingly clear. Summoned to a meeting of the secret council on a certain morning, Sully found a debate going on well calculated to enlighten him, had he needed enlightenment, as to what the future had in store. The question at issue had reference to the course to be pursued towards Savoy. That State, in consequence of the persuasions of the late King, and relying upon his support, had taken the step of declaring openly against Spain, and Sully now expressed himself, with uncompromising directness, as to the duty of France towards her ally. The conception of the Queen and her other counsellors of that duty did not coincide with his. The matter, Marie informed him, had been under discussion, and she, with those present, had determined that, care being taken not to destroy the hopes of the Duke of Savoy until the proper moment, an attempt should be made to establish peaceful relations with Spain by means of the double marriage.

It was more natural than prudent that, to this exposition of a nascent policy so wholly at variance with his dead master's views, as well as with his loyal and straightforward methods, Sully should have at first merely replied by a shrug of his shoulders. Pressed to speak by the Queen, he repeated his opinion that good faith should be kept with Savoy. But the time was past when either a shrug of the shoulders or reasoned arguments on the part of Sully would avail to alter the course of events.

In the meantime Paris was pervaded by a spirit of uneasiness and unrest. Everybody was alarmed. No one could precisely specify their cause of fear. The weak-minded were once again terrified by vague prophecies of coming catastrophes. The Paris militia was placed under arms, the palace was closely guarded. The Princes of the Blood rode through the streets strongly escorted. Some people apprehended a fresh St. Bartholomew. Bouillon believed, or affected to believe, that it was necessary for his safety to sleep under Condé's roof. Sully had hundreds of armed men at hand in case of need.

Whilst the citizens of Paris had been eager to give proof of their loyalty towards the son of their dead King, other classes of the community had been more remiss. Condé was popular at the moment, and nobles and courtiers showed so great a disposition to attach themselves by preference to the royal Princes that it was observed that the King was, in comparison, thinly attended—a state of things his mother set herself at once, with success, to remedy. It was essential to maintain the prestige of the Crown.

Concini's power and influence was becoming more and more apparent as the weeks of that hot summer went by. His ambition, it was true, was more personal than political. He wanted power ; he wanted—perhaps more—money. Therefore he wished the Queen to have her way ; he was jealous of any one who could be suspected of exercising a counter-influence, either over her or the little King. The great issues at stake, the destinies of France or of Europe, were of minor importance.

At present there was no one who could compete with him, or rather, with him and his wife. His position had been secured by his admission into the Council of State, at which his attendance had hitherto been of an informal character ; in August he was to become Marquis d'Ancre, and was, further, to obtain the government of Péronne, Roye, and Montdidier. He had, indeed, aspired to the charge of Calais, but there were difficulties in the way. A claimant with a better right to the post, and determined not to abandon it to a foreign adventurer, stated openly that he would first perform his religious duties and then proceed to kill Concini, were he to find him in the Queen's arms. Marie took the hint; the important post was not entrusted to her favourite.

Though, however, the Italian might be said to have no friends in France save the Queen, there were few who, at this juncture, did not consider it necessary to disguise their hatred. The King's minority would not last for ever ; and, apart from this, history had taught those astute enough to learn patience from it that the prosperity of a favourite is not likely to be prolonged. It was, therefore, safest to dissemble and to await developments.

If the rule of a Regent was, by the nature of things, temporary, its consequences might be made lasting, and from the first it was the Queen's endeavour to lay the foundations of that alliance with Spain upon which she had been always bent. When, in September, the Duke de Feria arrived from Spain as Envoy-extraordinary, entrusted with the duty of presenting the belated condolences of his master upon the late King's murder, nothing was wanting on her part to do him honour. By the public the guest was regarded with mingled feelings. The choice of the Ambassador had not been fortunate, so far as Parisian sentiment was concerned, and Lestoile remembered, and so did doubtless others, that Feria was son to the Duke of that name who had commanded the Spanish troops at the time of the League, and had been expelled by Henri from the city. Crowds, nevertheless, love pageants, and the envoy's entry was greeted with acclamation. From Concini's house Marie de Medicis watched the procession in person, herself unseen, the favourite being deputed to wait upon the Duke and to make him welcome upon her behalf.

It was true that, to the uninitiated, it may have seemed singular that a person no higher in rank than the "Sieur Concini" had been chosen to represent Marie de Medicis upon so important an occasion, but an inquiry from one of the new-comers elicited from the resident Spanish Ambassador a full explanation of the situation. Concini was, he informed his countryman, the Queen's major-domo, her chief courtier, the man she favoured and heaped with benefits. "In short," he ended, "he is her Duke of Lerma. What can I say more?" proceeding to dwell upon the necessity of showing every courtesy to the favourite.

On September 11 the audience of the Duke took place. On the preceding day a Spaniard belonging to his suite had paid Louis a more informal visit; when the boy, not without a suggestion of malice, had selected as a subject of conversation the recent capture of Juliers by the allied Powers, displaying to his guest a map of the town, and pointing out the disposition of the several forces. Lestoile was no doubt repeating the current gossip when, comparing the King's conduct towards the Spanish and English envoys, he observed that he seemed to have sucked in hatred of Spain with the milk from the breast.

In the speech Louis made at the State reception of the envoy the same hint of an undercurrent of unfriendliness might be detected. Greeting the Duke in the presence of a crowd of nobles and courtiers, he begged that he would assure his master that he would entertain for him "the same affection as the late King his father." On this occasion, as on others of the like kind, the dignity and self-possession of the child of eight appears to have struck the foreigners, no less than his own countrymen, with surprise, and if Louis and all present were aware that Henri had ever hated Spain, no exception could be taken to the ambiguous terms of his speech.

To the Parisians, traditionally hostile to Spain, the supposed animosity of their boy-King to that country was dear, and the evidences of it were eagerly reported.

Amongst the stories current was one which told how, finding Louis pensive, Père Cotton had asked him the reason.

"I shall take care not to tell it to you," the child was said to have answered, "for you would write it to Spain at once."

The reply was too significant to be overlooked; and Cotton, repeating it to the Queen, complained that her son was being prejudiced by those about him against the Society. Rebuked by his mother, Louis remained impenitent, if not defiant, observing that he would not always be little, and that it might afterwards be remembered how he had been reprimanded. It is not recorded how the Queen received what sounded like a menace. She may afterwards have recalled it.

The date fixed for the coronation was approaching. It was to take place at Rheims, with the customary solemnities. There was a lull in the struggle between the rival claimants for place and power, and the function was to be graced by the presence of all the nobles and princes of importance in the realm, save those whose duties detained them elsewhere.

"You will witness," Marie boasted to the Tuscan envoy, "what you have never yet seen, and what I shall never care to see again."

Louis was impatient for the ceremony in which he was to play the leading part. Speaking of his mother's *Sacre*, he complained that at Saint-Denis the worst lodging had been allotted to him, that his apartment had included a well and a cellar, and that a stable and a duck-pond had been below it. There was no danger that he would suffer these indignities now.

Wherever he might go, he was a personage of importance, and was treated as such. He will have appreciated the change. Yet his position must often have entailed weariness and fatigue. The long journey towards Rheims had been begun on October 2; and, as the Court proceeded on its way, the Queen once asked the boy whether he would undertake it again for a second coronation.

"Yes, Madame," answered Louis readily; "for another kingdom, not otherwise."

During the days passed at Rheims and in the intervals of more serious avocations, a healthy survival of childhood—a childhood those around him were doing their best to crush—is at times apparent, alternating with attention to religious rites and to the duties belonging to his station. He listens patiently to the harangues greeting his arrival in the Norman city; is confirmed on the eve of his coronation by the Cardinal de Joyeuse; and that same afternoon—"enfant enfantissime"—plays at horses with his boy companions, driving them, harnessed, before him.

At the coronation ceremony—lasting two hours and a quarter—he conducted himself, on the whole, "fort vertueusement." But ebullitions of boyish spirits nevertheless broke out. The anointing over, he was undergoing the ordeal of being kissed by each peer, and, discerning a familiar face, bestowed a gay little box on the ear to the Duc d'Elbeuf; and again varied the solemnity of the scene by an attempt to tread upon the train of the Maréchal de la Châtre as he preceded him up the church. When Epernon, on the other hand, offered him the prescribed salute, he was observed—and those who distrusted the Duke took note of it—to raise both hands to steady the crown upon his head.

At last the long rite was over and, put to bed that he might rest, France's anointed sovereign lay contentedly playing with his favourite lead soldiers and fashioning engines out of cards.

Other functions followed. Made a Knight of the Holy Ghost, he admitted, in his turn, the Prince de Condé into the Order. On October 19 the journey homewards was begun, and two days later, at Saint-Marcoul, he performed the distasteful duty of touching nine hundred sick for the King's Evil. The days when he had refused to replace his father in washing the feet of the poor were gone by. He accomplished his present task steadily and dexterously, turning a little pale as the work proceeded, but refusing to admit that he was weary.

At nightfall on October 30 Paris was reached, the King's first entry into his capital being greeted by a hundred salutes from a hundred cannon, as, a gallant little scarlet-clad figure, "stately and bold," he rode on his great white horse through the torch-lit streets.

Amongst the great officers and servants of the Crown one place had been empty. Sully had not assisted at the coronation of his master's son. Illness was the ostensible cause of his absence; but, though this was no mere pretext, other reasons had contributed to make him crave permission of the Queen to visit his own estates rather than accompany the Court to Rheims. He was, in fact, contemplating retirement from public life, so long as the present condition of affairs should last—one giving him no hope of exercising a beneficial influence. The time, however, was not yet come when he could be spared, and pressure was successfully brought upon him by the Queen to induce him to resume his duties at Paris. It was not until the following January that he finally abandoned his post.

Meanwhile the autumn was occupied by incessant struggles between the Princes of the Blood, at variance with each other as well as with the great house of Lorraine, each claiming the pre-eminence—such preeminence as could be hoped for, Marie being Regent and a foreign adventurer directing the performance from behind the scenes. How much Louis understood of what was going forward is uncertain. "The King," observes Héroard, "listens to everything, remembers everything, knows everything, and gives no sign of it." Perhaps Héroard was right; Louis, as he said himself, was not "grand parleur." A scene taking place in January, graphically described by the physician, may indicate that he was on the watch for an absence of respect on the part of Condé, one of the chief offenders in the matters in dispute.

A meeting was being held in the Queen's private cabinet, with a view of adjusting the differences between the Princes, when the first Prince of the Blood entered brusquely and with no sign of deference. Covering himself at once, with no special salutation to the King, he took a seat, and addressed M. de Bouillon. The King went to M. de Souvré, and indignantly complained.

"Mousseu de Souvré," he said, "Look, look at

Mousseu le Prince. He has seated himself in my presence ; he is insolent."

"Sire," replied M. de Souvré soothingly, "it is that he is speaking to M. de Bouillon, and does not see you."

The King was not content with the excuse.

"I will go and place myself near him," he said, "and see if he rises."

The test was applied. Condé retained his seat, disregarding the approach of the sovereign. Louis returned to the *gouverneur*.

"You saw that he did not rise ?" he asked. "He is very insolent."

Signs were not wanting that the boy was growing older. His life was one to foster rapid development. Already the thought of the impression he would make weighed upon him. Retiring to his private room to play with his "little toy-men," he would forbid his attendants to mention his occupation ; and, more than once, when he considered that his slumbers had been unduly protracted, he would complain, almost with tears, of having been allowed to sleep so long ; it would be said that he was lazy.

More significant was his bearing when told that Sully—it will be remembered he had never shown any liking for him—was in January deprived of his posts. Louis was manifestly disturbed.

"They have taken away the finances from M. de Sully ?" he asked his *gouverneur*.

"Yes, Sire," was the reply.

"Why ?" he inquired, with a startled air.

"I am ignorant of the reasons," answered Souvré discreetly. "But the Queen has not done it without much cause, as she always acts after great consideration. Are you sorry?"

"Yes," answered Louis laconically.

He may have remembered that the minister had been his father's friend. He may, with a child's instinct, have divined that he was more true and loyal and wise than the courtiers who treated him with flattery and adulation. The expression of regret is, in any case, in curious contradiction to the dislike he had displayed towards the Duke in former days.

If the King had more cause than he knew to be "marri," there were singularly few who shared his sentiments. Sully was hated on all hands. The roughness of his manners and bearing, amounting to positive discourtesy, the duties appertaining to his office, his State economies, the necessity of constantly opposing obstacles to rapacity and ambition, combined with the favour shown him by the late King, to render him odious; the fact that, in serving his master, he had not omitted to serve himself, and had amassed, though with the King's knowledge, an enormous fortune, adding an edge, comprehensible if not justifiable, to the animosity of his enemies.

Into the causes of his fall, the rivalries and intrigues at work to ensure it, it is not necessary to enter. To have remained at his post under the changed circumstances would have been, sooner or later, an impossibility, unless he had been prepared to buy office by an absolute sacrifice of principle. The man who had been Henri's friend and confidant, and had shared his views and projects, foreign and domestic, could not act as the instrument of a government aiming at a reversal, in almost every respect, of the policy of the late reign.

Marie told Richelieu, it is true, and Richelieu believed, or pretended to believe, that Henri, wearying at length of Sully's ill-temper and perversity, had contemplated at the time of his death his removal from the management of the finances ; and it has been seen that Malherbe described a quarrel which had for a brief moment raised the hopes of the minister's foes. But that Henri seriously intended his dismissal is inconceivable. The cloud, whether it was that alluded to by the poet or another, would have been dispersed ; a storm, as often before, would have cleared the air, and the statesman would have retained both his post and the affection of the King. It is also abundantly clear that, up to the very last, the two were on confidential terms. Marie's interest was, however, to make it appear that she had done no more than carry out her husband's intention in dispensing with the services of the man he trusted most.

The parting took place ostensibly on terms of amity. A farewell gift of 300,000 crowns was presented to the Duke ; and, though deprived of the charge of the finances and the Bastille, he retained the governorship of Poitou and other subordinate posts. Nevertheless, to a man of his powers, and accustomed to exercise them, his forced withdrawal from public life could not be otherwise than bitter.

"I know of no one capable of doing what I have done," he told Elbène, the Queen's *maître d'hôtel.* The statement could not have been controverted ; but of his services Louis was to be deprived.

The public, looking on, drew its own conclusions as to the causes dictating the minister's dismissal. Of those conclusions a placard affixed to the Arsenal is an indication : "A house to be let for the Easter quarter"—thus it ran—"apply to the Marquis d'Ancre, at the Faubourg Saint-Germain."

The Queen might have hesitated to deprive herself of the services of so practised and skilled a financier. Yet, the step once taken, his absence must have been a relief ; for she could not doubt that she would find him irreconcilably opposed to the scheme she had most at heart—namely, the Spanish marriages and alliance. Through all the months which had elapsed since Henri's death negotiations, proposals, counter-proposals, had gone on, Spain now hanging back, now showing herself fully prepared to fall in with the project. The chief obstacle in the way had been Savoy. Promised by the late King the hand of his eldest daughter for his heir, the Duke protested in vain against the breach of faith in contemplation. But, though indignant, he was helpless. At one moment, indeed, war had appeared possible. Savoyard troops had menaced Geneva, whose existence as an independent republic had been guaranteed by the treaties of Vervins and Lyons. The Queen talked of taking her son to the latter city, where, should hostilities ensue, his presence with the army would have obviated the necessity of entrusting its command to Condé.

By one person at least the prospect thus opened out was eagerly welcomed. Louis's imagination caught fire at the chance of exchanging his favourite lead soldiers for troops of flesh and blood, and he declared that it would seem a thousand years to him till he was in the saddle. Looking at his reflection in a mirror, he asserted that he had doubled in size since the war had been in question.

He was doomed to disappointment. The appeal to arms was not made, and a hollow pacification was arranged with the Duke of Savoy.

CHAPTER XX

1611

Parties at Court—The Saumur assembly—Louis's tutors—Departure of Alexandre de Vendôme—Matrimonial projects—Death of the Duc d'Orléans—His burial—The Spanish marriages—Louis and Condé—Charles d'Albert de Luynes.

DURING the year 1611 the situation, so far as the rival powers in the State were concerned, remained practically unchanged. The same conflict of opposed interests prevailed ; the same principle—every one for himself—was in fashion. The most important development, amongst the parties with which the Queen had to reckon, was that Condé and Soissons had arranged a treaty of peace, binding themselves to make common cause in case of the disagreement of either with the Regent. The comparative security implied by the fact that the Princes of the Blood were in opposition to one another was over ; and they were united in hostility to the house of Lorraine, on the whole loyal to the Crown and the Regent. The condition of the Court, in these years, resembles nothing so much as a kaleidoscope, presenting continually shifting combinations, as the units belonging to one group detach themselves from it to join another, to which they are attracted by the all-powerful magnet of self-interest. Truth, loyalty, fidelity, are almost non-existent. The aged Mayenne alone, head of the house of Guise, once Henri's foe and after his defeat consistently loyal, maintained a different attitude, telling those engaged in the scramble for place, power, or money, that it was ill done to put the King's minority to ransom; they should consider it reward enough to have done their duty at a time when they could not be compelled to perform it.

He spoke to deaf ears, and the ignoble struggle went on. The Princes of the Blood, Condé, Conti, and Soissons; the ministerial party, Sillery and Villeroy at their head; the Concini couple and their dependents; Bouillon, Épernon, the Duc de Bellegarde, and the whole house of Lorraine, were alike engaged in the contest, at times making a single-handed attempt to compass their ends, or else forming alliances, to be dissolved as soon as more advantageous ones offered.

The general assembly of the Protestants, held at Saumur, supplied an additional element of anxiety. Sully's removal and the rumours of the projected arrangement with regard to Spain had given rise to serious uneasiness in Huguenot quarters, and furnished those belonging to the Religion with a legitimate cause for apprehension that a radical change in the late King's policy towards them was in contemplation. But the meeting dispersed without having, on the whole, justified the fears entertained.

The question of the Spanish marriages was predominant in the Queen's mind; and, though the negotiations were ostensibly kept private, reports of what was going forward could not fail to get abroad, giving rise to dismay in some minds, satisfaction in others. That the person chiefly concerned was becoming reconciled to the idea is indicated by his reply when Marie, saying lightly that she wanted to get him married, inquired of Louis which of the two, Spain or England, he liked best.

The boy only replied to his mother with a smile; but, turning to a bystander—

"Spain," he said, "Spain."

As to marriage, or any other question of importance, his preferences would have had little weight. In some respects they operated in the opposite direction to that he would have desired. Any liking he displayed for those about him was a danger-signal, since the formation of a strong attachment on his part would have been a menace to the future of those who held the reins of government; and the fact that Louis is said to have felt "déplaisir" when Des Yveteaux was informed that his services were to be dispensed with may have been at least an additional reason for getting rid of him.

Divers causes were assigned for the tutor's dismissal. His religious views were reported to be unsound. The Queen had from the first been opposed—not, it appears, without reason—to his appointment. He had also spoken indiscreetly of Concini, and made unwise allusion to the King's majority. At any rate, he was to go, and took leave of his pupil, observing with bitterness that he had had the trouble and others would have the credit.

M. le Fèvre, who was to replace Des Yveteaux, was a learned gentleman, close upon seventy, whose influence in years to come would not be a cause of disquiet. He enjoyed his post scarcely more than a year, dying suddenly in November 1613. When he was formally presented by the Queen to her son, Louis's behaviour left nothing to be desired. The ministers of State, with Souvré and Soissons, were present on the occasion, and the Queen having introduced the tutor, the Chancellor pronounced his eulogy, making the King the comprehensive promise that he would soon render him learned "sans l'ennuyer." The King, for his part, appears to have conceived a kindly feeling for the old man; and when it was proposed to give him the room formerly occupied by Des Yveteaux, he interposed, saying there would be too many stairs, and pointing out another more fitting.

In spite of natural impulses of courtesy or kindness, Louis was not a scholar inclined to smooth the path of his teachers and render their task agreeable. The instruction they bestowed upon him was tried on its own merits and was not accepted in the spirit of the model pupil.

"Fleurence will tell me some more follies," he said crossly, of an ecclesiastic who filled the office of *sous-précepteur*. The remark was heard by the tutor—as it was probably meant to be—and he answered with acrimony.

"I would rather, Sire," he said, "that you should hate me as an honest man than love me as a bad one. I could gain my livelihood in Turkey as well as with your Majesty."

The assertion was a strong one, especially at the date when it was made, but it may have been not unjustified. The preceptor was clearly at the end of his patience.

Louis had a special distaste for the lengthy sermons inflicted upon him. Sometimes, it was true, he could strike a bargain with the preacher and induce him to place a limit to his eloquence. But this was not always in his power; and the Feast of the Assumption, 1611, is an example of the religious observances imposed upon a child of nine. Taken to confession to Père Cotton, he was kept an hour by the priest in the confessional; after which he drove to the Augustines, received Holy Communion, and heard Mass, before touching four hundred and fifty sick for the King's Evil. The heat was intense; and, almost fainting, so that his hands had to be bathed with wine, the boy was brought home and allowed a short respite in bed. In the afternoon he was again taken to church—this time to Saint-André-des-Arcs—to hear a sermon from the Abbé de Bourgeuil; when, overcome by fatigue, he slept throughout the discourse, in spite of attempts to rouse him, asking plaintively whether there were no means of bringing his bed to the sermon. Nor were the day's devotions over till he had heard Vespers at the Cordeliers.

Shortly after Des Yveteaux's dismissal, another more grievous parting was to be inflicted on the boy. He had always loved Alexandre de Vendôme; and his grief at the prospect of a separation had been allowed to prevail during the previous year, the Chevalier remaining at Paris. Now, however, it had been decided that he was to be removed, the Queen making a pretext of sending him to the headquarters of his Order at Malta. Her reasons were well understood, and when Condé, in conflict with her later, demanded that the Chevalier should be recalled, it was believed that his motive was not so much affection for the lad or the desire alleged to give pleasure to the King, as the injury to be thereby inflicted on the Queen, who had removed him from Court because his brother loved him.

Louis was at Saint-Germain when the blow fell. Since his transference to the Louvre his visits there had been few and short ; but he was fond of his little brothers and sisters—" mes enfants," as he would call them—and the comparative freedom of life at the château may have allured him. In July he had entreated his mother to allow him to spend a day there ; and Marie consented, though a deputation from the Protestant assembly demanded his presence in Paris, and he had, moreover, been guilty of a blunder in begging the Duchesse de Guise to add her supplications to his own. The Queen, as she told him reproachfully, would do it for love of him ; and what she would do for him she would do for no other person.

He gained his point ; the prisoner of State had a day's leave of absence, and the next morning he was early on the road. In August a longer visit was paid, and it was at Saint-Germain that he learnt that he was to be deprived of his favourite companion.

The day had begun ill. Having arranged a set of silver figurines as a miniature fair of Saint-Germain, he had been forced, in high dudgeon, to quit the game and go to his studies ; when presently the Chevalier arrived at the château in tears, to fling himself on his knees before the King, begging that the Queen's orders that he should start for Malta might be rescinded.

" Have pity on me, Sire," he cried lamentably, " the

Queen wishes to remove me from your Majesty, and to send me to Malta."

"*Hé* !" said Louis, manifestly startled. "What have you done to the Queen, my mother ?"

"Nothing, Sire," was the reply.

"What ! You will go upon the sea ?" asked Louis.

"Yes, Sire."

"Take good care of yourself," ordered the King. "Be the strongest when you go to war, and write to me often."

It is easy to see that the boy recognised the futility of protest ; it had been his rule, from nursery days, to make no request that would meet with a refusal, and he was too proud to offer a useless resistance. But he wept bitterly. "It was great pity," says Héroard, "to hear his lamentations and tears, out of the affection he bore him." Calling him Zagaye—some childish nickname—he showed that, young as he was, he had divined the real motive at work.

"They want to take him away," he said, "because I love him."

There was no help for it. An hour later the Chevalier was gone ; nor did the brothers meet again till four years had passed by.

The Queen was busy that summer. She was an inveterate match-maker ; and, not content with disposing of her own children, she was bent upon arranging marriages for her Italian cousins. The Grand-duke of Tuscany had four daughters, and on their behalf, as well as on that of a daughter of her sister, the Duchess of Mantua, her efforts were indefatigable.

Young Montmorency, son to the Constable, was specially eligible. Henri had wished in vain to secure him for Gabrielle's daughter; he had gone through a form of marriage, afterwards annulled, with another bride; and, being sixteen and a handsome lad, it was the Regent's desire to wed him to one of the Medicis sisters; doing her best, when this scheme was abandoned, to present him with her Mantuan niece. Her brain was teeming with matrimonial projects. Her second daughter, Christine, might become Princess of Wales. Another Medicis could be wedded to the Duke of Savoy's heir, cheated by the Spanish scheme of his French bride.

In October an important addition was made to the crowned or royal personages crowding the marriage market. Margaret of Austria, Queen of Spain, died in childbirth, and Philip was a widower. His Ambassador at Paris received from him a letter "which would make stones weep," and the choice of another wife was at once discussed. Why, asked Campiglia, the Florentine envoy, should not Marie fill the dead Queen's place? The question was put to her by the Tuscan less than a month after Margaret's death.

It was not the first time that the idea of remarriage had been broached to the Queen. An astrologer who was said to have predicted Henri's death to his master, the Duke of Savoy, had added that his highness would marry the King's widow and administer the government of France. Informed of the prediction shortly after the murder, Marie had dismissed the idea of any second marriage—even, as she added, should the King of Spain become a widower. Now that the contemplated contingency had occurred, she treated the question lightly. She was, she told Campiglia, too well pleased with her present position to have any wish to change it. Even when the minority should be nominally over, she would remain for years mistress in France; and would afterwards have become too old.

Meantime, death was busy amongst those connected with her. In September her sister died. Always attached to her family, it was a heavy blow; and was followed by a heavier. Towards the close of the year the first gap was made in the group of children brought up together at Saint-Germain by the death of the little Duc d'Orléans, whose health had been so constant a source of anxiety to his father.

The end can have taken few by surprise. Visiting the Louvre after Louis's coronation, Sully had found all the royal children at the palace, "each, according to their age, receiving him very well and with great caresses." On his return to the Arsenal, he had predicted, tears in his eyes, that his master's second son would not live long.

None of the children had lately been well; and Marie had conceived the idea of bringing the younger ones to the Luxembourg, where they would be to a greater extent under her own eye, and in the hope that change of air would prove beneficial. She was herself, with Louis, at Saint-Germain when little Orléans's short life came to an end.

Louis had started from Paris, on November 14, in high spirits, prepared to display his new accomplishments to an admiring feminine circle.

"My sisters," he told Héroard, "will be very glad to see me shoot with the arquebus. . . . *Mamanga* will ask M. de Souvré how he can allow me to shoot, and will go and say so to the Queen, my mother."

By the time he reached the château his brother's condition was already causing anxiety. The Duke had been suffering from slight convulsions, accompanied by a species of lethargy. Waking, however, he responded to Louis's greeting with ready courtesy and the respect ever shown to the elder brother.

"Good-night, *mon petit papa*," he said, "you do me too much honour in taking the trouble to come and see me."

Bursting into tears, Louis left the room. It was the brothers' last meeting.

"Is there no means of saving him?" the King asked M. de Souvré the following day.

The *gouverneur's* answer was not reassuring. The doctors were doing all they could. The King must pray.

Louis was ready and willing. But was there nothing else to be done? he persisted anxiously.

A votive offering to our Lady of Loretto, taking the form of a silver image of the height of the sick child, was suggested. Louis caught at the idea.

"Send to Paris at once," he ordered; "let them make haste"; then fell, with tears, to saying his prayers.

On the night of November 16, the King, waking at one o'clock, asked for news of his brother; then—not being informed that all was over—slept again. Almost at that very hour the child had passed away. "A short time before," records Héroard, "he said that he had seen in a dream an angel, who told him that his good *papa* wished to see him, and that he would see him soon. 'Je l'embrasserai si fort,' he said gaily."

Henri-Quatre was not forgotten by his children.

When the news was broken by Concini to Louis on the following morning he received it with manifest distress and loss of colour. Then, with a child's impatience of grief, he tried his best to amuse himself, begging M. de Souvré to ask the Queen not to insist upon his sprinkling the body with holy-water. The ceremonies and the horror attending his father's death were not obliterated from his memory, nor was it without reluctance that he was induced to occupy the great chamber at the Louvre where he had seen Henri lying dead.

To what degree the Queen would be inconsolable for the loss of her son God alone knew, wrote the Tuscan Secretary, Ammirato, whether using the words equivocally or not. Richelieu, writing of the event at a later date, mentions that he had been told that, on a former occasion, Marie had been so little moved by a serious illness of the Duke's that Henri—always an anxious father—had considered it strange, and had taxed her with lack of affection for her children. The difference now, observed the Cardinal easily, was that the child's life was more essential to her interests, since by her husband's death she was debarred from having other sons. Richelieu was perhaps right, and political exigencies may have increased the Queen's sorrow. But it is more charitable to believe that Marie was not by temperament an anxious woman, and that notwithstanding the Duke's delicacy, she had never contemplated the contingency of his death.

Yet it is singular to note the absence of pomp and ceremony with which the nameless child—he had not yet received public baptism—who was yet next heir to the throne, was laid to rest in Saint-Denis, his "petit papa" being apparently not present at the funeral. The fact that it was taking place may have been withheld from the boy, with a view of sparing him emotion; for in the record of the day no trace is to be discerned of any consciousness on his part of what was going forward; and the contrast is a singular one between the one brother, carried to his grave with bare decorum, and the other lying contentedly in bed playing with his favourite toys, whilst music was performed in his chamber. It is true that his pleasure was alloyed by the entrance of the Cardinal de Gonzaga, come to listen to the songs. Regard for his dignity constrained the King to relinquish his playthings so long as the Cardinal was present, returning with open delight to his miniature cannon when the visitor had withdrawn. So ended the burial day. On the next, Louis "gave audience to five ambassadors on his brother's decease."

Another scene, also connected with the dead child, is half-piteous, half-comic; when his baby affianced-bride, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, for whose hand suitors were contending, was brought to visit the Queen, clad in a widow's deep mourning. Touched and compassionate, Marie dispensed her from the necessity of wearing her weeds; promising, besides, that Anjou should take his brother's place, though

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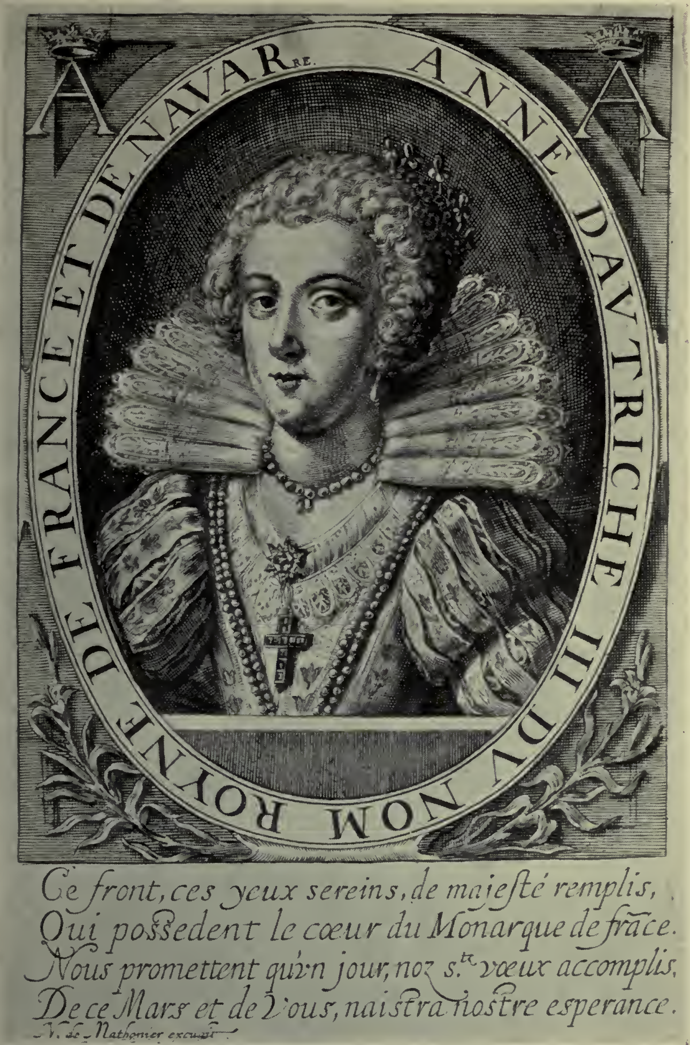
ANNE DAVTRICHE III DV NOM ROYNE DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE
Ce front, ces yeux sereins, de majeſté remplis,
Qui poſsedent le cœur du Monarque de frãce.
Nous promettent qu'un jour, noz s.ts vœux accomplis,
De ce Mars et de Vous, naiſtra noſtre esperance.
N. de Mathonier excudit

From an engraving by N. de Mathonier.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA.

confessing that she was unable to guarantee that he would treat her with as much respect. Orléans had never presumed to kiss her without first asking permission. Anjou, his mother feared, would not—at three years old—be equally discreet.

By the middle of December the great wish of Marie's heart was granted, and the double Spanish marriages were definitely arranged. Some discussion took place as to the date at which the Infanta and Madame were to be exchanged, the Queen pleading that the fact that Anne was motherless was a reason for hastening, rather than retarding, her transference to France, where she herself would act the part of a mother. But Philip declined to part with his daughter till, in two years' time, she should have completed at least her twelfth year, and Marie was fain to be content.

The Princes of the Blood on their return to Paris, from which they had absented themselves, were less so. The affair had been settled without their advice or concurrence; and, though they were not in a position to oppose the arrangement openly, it was another item added to their reckoning against the Regent. More and more they stood over against her, a hostile and menacing force.

"M. le Chancelier," said Louis one day, as, alert and suspicious, he watched his mother and Condé in conversation, and drew his conclusions from her changing colour and the Prince's gestures, "M. le Prince is chiding the Queen, my mother. It should not be endured. I will not have it."

Neither did he respond with cordiality when his cousins showed a desire to deal with him directly, and not through untrustworthy channels. Taking him apart one day, Condé bade him not to believe that the Princes of his own blood had any thought of carrying him off—a report of the kind appearing to have been in circulation. To risk their lives for him was their sole desire.

Louis received the protestation coldly.

"Je ne m'en soucie pas," he said ungraciously.

If there was little chance that he would be disposed to attach himself to the party led by the Princes, another danger, as yet unsuspected, was preparing. About this time a scene is recorded, trifling in itself, yet not unimportant when interpreted by the light of future events.

Louis lay half-asleep and dreaming.

"Ho, how beautiful . . . how beautiful, is the lure! . . . the lure! . . . Luynes . . . Luynes," he murmured between sleeping and waking.

Charles d'Albert, Seigneur de Luynes, was the King's falconer. He was to become, as many would know to their cost, his favourite. The manner of his obtaining the post which was the first rung of the ladder is curious; the very means taken to obviate the danger of the King's contracting an inconvenient affection having led to the connection that proved in the end fatal to his mother's sway.

Knowing Louis's passion for falconry, it had occurred to the younger Vitry, now captain of the guard in his father's place, and to a comrade of his, de la Curée, that could a dependent of their own be appointed to take charge of the King's birds, hitherto under the care of a mere servant, it would prove to their interest. Having selected a guardsman skilled in the art as their candidate, they took the opportunity when, dinner ended, Louis was almost alone, to suggest to him, in a low voice, that it was not fitting that his hawks should remain in the hands of a peasant, and, reminding him of instances of their protégé's skill, recommended him for the post. The King listened favourably, though, according to his wont, committing himself to no decided opinion. All might have gone according to their wishes had not a young attendant of Louis's, Fontenay by name, overheard the conversation, and, having taken counsel with the son and nephew of Souvré—just then ill and confined to his bed—hurried to the *gouverneur*, and disclosed to him what was going forward. Fontenay suggested further that, instead of the proposed soldier, who was believed to be in the interest of the Concini party, Luynes would be a fit person to minister to the King's pleasure, and, owing his appointment to Souvré, would be likely to show himself grateful. Souvré fully concurred ; Luynes was put forward, and, Louis having a liking for him, placed him at once in his new post. Into no one's imagination had it entered as a possibility that Luynes, thirty-five years of age and possessed of no remarkable intelligence, would become a favourite, and all was considered to have been put on a safe and satisfactory footing, the King's "oiseaux de cabinet"—so called because he always kept some of them in his apartments and to distinguish them from those belonging to the Grand Falconer's charge—remaining under the care of his new attendant,

CHAPTER XXI

1612

The year 1612—The Spanish marriages finally arranged—Truce with the Princes—Signature of the marriage contracts—The Duc de Bellegarde and the magic mirror—Death of the Comte de Soissons—Louis in disgrace.

THERE is little to distinguish the year 1612, in its main features, from what had preceded it. The same passions were at work, the same motives continued to direct conduct. Fresh cabals were formed, one combination replaced another: that was all. If a difference is discernible it is chiefly that the ascendancy of the Marquis d'Ancre and his wife was not so complete and uninterrupted as before, and that upon occasion the Queen vindicated her independence by a refusal to act upon Concini's advice. Upon the whole, however, he and his wife continued to be the most powerful factors at Court. When the Marquis seemed to have fallen into temporary disgrace, sceptical observers questioned whether the reality corresponded to the outward appearance.

The Comte de Soissons, until his death towards the end of the year, supplied a constant cause of disquiet to the Government. His restless ambition forbade him to remain content with the concessions he obtained;

his position being further strengthened by the league uniting him and Condé, and by intrigues he carried on with d'Ancre. Any sympathy that might have been felt for the great French nobles in their resistance of foreign influence is destroyed by the readiness they testified to make terms with the enemy when it was their personal interest to do so.

During the spring the Regent's supreme desire was accomplished, and the Spanish marriages were finally settled. On January 26, in a speech from the Chancellor, the announcement was made to the assembled Council, consisting of the Princes of the Blood and the officers of the Crown. Save by Condé and Soissons, no dissentient voice was raised, but the attitude of the two was at once made clear.

"*Mon frère*," said Soissons, turning to his cousin, "what do you think of this kind of Council? See what account is made of us, and how we are treated!"

The Queen, overhearing, as she was meant to overhear, the words, was observed to flush, and would have replied. The Chancellor, however, interposed to prevent it, and nothing further passed on the subject. Whether the Princes approved or not, it was clear that the Regent did not intend to be turned from her purpose; and two months later, on March 25, in the absence of both Condé and Soissons, the necessary preliminaries were gone through and Don Innigo de Cardenas, Spanish Ambassador, formally recognised Madame as Princess of Spain.

Everything had been done to lend importance to the occasion. The Court was present, with the officers of the Crown, the Marshals of France, and many prelates. Madame, dressed in the Spanish fashion, wore a gown of cloth of silver, embroidered in gold ; the King was also dressed in gold and silver. Kneeling before little Elizabeth, Cardenas rendered her the homage due to the bride of his Prince. In the sight of the entire Court the conclusion of the affair was declared.

The announcement was made in another fashion to the general public. Carousels, entertainments, festivities of all kinds, illuminations and fireworks, celebrated the betrothal of the King ; and Louis, wherever he appeared, was greeted with enthusiastic acclamation. The man in the street might not, on reflection, approve of the implied reversal of the late King's foreign policy, but he loved amusement, and nothing so magnificent had ever been witnessed in Paris. "Night was turned into day, darkness into light, and the streets into amphitheatres."

The Princes of the Blood did not share in the festivities. If not categorically refusing their consent to the marriages, they had betaken themselves, sulking, to the provinces. Condé had refused to return ; Soissons, saying that he intended to spend Easter at his own castle at Dreux, promised vaguely to render obedience later on to the King's summons. The fact that the two were together was not reassuring to the Government ; and, though resolute in her determination to hold her own and to withstand the extravagant demands which the Comte de Soissons, in particular, was always making, the Queen thought it well to attempt a policy of conciliation. The Marquis d'Ancre was therefore sent to visit the Count on her behalf; the ministerial party, opposed to the favourite and distrustful of his methods, deputing Villeroy to share his mission and to keep watch over his proceedings.

At the time when Villeroy was to start it appears that the Regent was, for some reason, ill content with the Parlement; since to his inquiry as to when he was to leave Paris she replied sharply that it would be so soon as that body had executed her commands.

"Madame," said the King, overhearing what was said, and confident of his own powers of persuasion, "Madame, tell them to assemble, and send me to them. They will not refuse me."

The Queen may have acted on the suggestion. At all events, Villeroy started on his mission with d'Ancre; and the two were so far successful that a species of treaty was concluded with the Princes. The Regent engaged to abstain from taking action for the future without their consent and promised to each the possession of a stronghold in their governments; they consented to return to the capital and to renew amicable relations with the Queen. By a private arrangement between d'Ancre and Soissons both were further pledged to do what lay in their power to abase the ministerial party, and though all must have known that the reconciliation of the Regent and the Princes was a hollow one, the alliance was likely to continue so long as the favourite could hope by its means to compass the ruin of his enemies.

Meanwhile peace was ostensibly restored. On Ascension Day Condé and Soissons rode into Paris, escorted by some seven or eight thousand horsemen, and, in the absence of the King and Queen, paid their respects to the two youngest representatives of the royal family, Gaston and Henriette, at the Louvre. Soon afterwards they repaired to Fontainebleau, where the Court was residing, and gave formal consent to the Spanish marriages. The last obstacle in the way of the Queen's cherished project was removed. Young Mayenne—the loyal old Duke was dead—was dispatched, with a brilliant retinue, to conclude the betrothal at Madrid, and the Duke of Pastrana was expected to arrive, with a similar object, in Paris. By August all measures had been taken to seal, so far as marriage was concerned, Louis's fate.

The boy himself had little voice in the matter.

"My son, I want to marry you," the Queen said to him lightly. "Do you wish it?"

"Je le veux bien, Madame," was the reply. Yet signs were not wanting which indicated, to observant eyes, that his old prejudice with regard to his father's former opponent was not wholly extinct. It was true that the Tuscan envoy, who plumed himself upon having been instrumental in bringing the match about, reported that the boy was accustomed to gaze, "as if in love," at the portraits of the Prince of Spain and the Infanta which had been hung facing his mother's bed; but the evidence is not conclusive.

"Let us not speak of that," Louis answered shortly, when, on the eve of the day fixed for the signing of the contracts, Souvré told him that he was to be married on the morrow; and it was noticed that, in replying in the prescribed terms to the Ambassador's address, rendering thanks to Philip for his good-will, and giving the assurance that he would honour him as a father and love him as a brother, he omitted, whether by accident or design, the further dictated promise that he would make use of his good counsels.

It had been on August 13 that the envoy from Spain had entered Paris—an earnest of the drawbacks attending the return of the Princes to Court being experienced at his first audience. Something approaching to a brawl took place in the Queen's presence owing to their refusal to admit the right of the Duc de Nevers to share their bench. Ten days later, on the feast of St. Louis, the solemn signature of the contracts of marriage took place.

In the King's presence-chamber—which that morning he had personally helped to prepare for the ceremony of the evening—the momentous business was transacted. Princes, princesses, officers of State, ambassadors, crowded the room as the contract was read, all uncovering whensoever the name of King or Queen occurred. Then came the affixing of the signatures, Louis signing first, followed by his mother and Madame—whom he jogged with his elbow as she inscribed her name. Queen Marguerite came next; and the Ambassadors, the Nuncio, and the Princes in turn added their autographs. Marie, obstinate, determined, headstrong, had triumphed; her will had been executed.

At Madrid all had prospered, save that Mayenne had permitted pleasure to follow upon business, and had paid overmuch attention to Spanish ladies to please Spanish taste. Anne had testified no reluctance to be married.

"Say that I am very impatient to see him," she told Mayenne, who, taking his departure—the articles duly signed—had inquired if she had any orders to give him with regard to the King, his master.

"Eh, Madame," remonstrated her *gouvernante*, as she heard the child's message; "what will the King of France think when M. le Duc tells him that you are so anxious to be married?"

Anne was impenitent.

"You have taught me," she retorted, "that the truth must always be spoken, and I am acting on that lesson."

She also sent Louis a scarf, made with her own hands—an honour he totally failed to appreciate. It was a day of magnificent presents. His mother was having a diamond necklace of immense value made for her future daughter-in-law; informing her own daughter, with complacency, that it would show Spaniards that she came of a good family—which was perhaps a not unnatural view for a Medicis to take of the evidences of race. Madame herself had been presented with a splendid box, covered with diamonds, on behalf of the Prince of Spain; and when Louis received for his share, on the same day, a gift possessing a merely sentimental value, he was in no wise gratified.

In spite of the lull in the hostilities between the Princes and the Regent, Paris continued to be far from tranquil. Every man's hand was against every man where rival interests conflicted; nor was any means of injuring an enemy despised, whether it took the form of stabbing a foe in the open streets or recourse was had to more secret and unobtrusive methods. The Duc de Bellegarde, Grand Equerry, more commonly called M. le Grand, was, if report did him no wrong, engaged about this time in a private enterprise of his own, of this last kind, directed against the Concini couple.

Bellegarde was a prominent figure at Court. A close attendant upon the late King, he had been a frequent guest at Saint-Germain in Louis's childish days, and the strong liking entertained for him by the boy would in itself have sufficed to render him an object of suspicion.

"Here is an honest man," Louis had remarked, taking hold of the Duke's beard with a laugh, as he received the formal salutations of the Knights of the Holy Ghost at Rheims; and Héroard notes that, on the return of the Grand Equerry, after an absence, in the course of the present year, the King made him welcome "avec transport."

These facts alone would have caused him to be regarded with jealousy by other aspirants to Louis's favour; it was also natural that, as an attached servant of Henri's, Bellegarde should, for his part, have been in opposition to Concini and his wife, and anxious to combat their influence. Despairing, as Richelieu surmised, of compassing his purpose by legitimate and human means, he resolved to resort to diabolical methods. There was at Paris a certain Moisset who, from a simple tailor, had risen to wealth and opulence, and was likewise understood to indulge in illicit practices. This gentleman was said to have offered to put Bellegarde into communication with persons who, by means of an enchanted mirror, would supply him with accurate information as to the degree of favour enjoyed by the Marquis and his wife, and who would moreover enable him to secure the like for himself. The Duke was reported to have fallen in readily with the suggestion ; but, before it had been put into operation, the Concini had got wind of the affair, apparently through the very dealers in the black art who were to have been employed against them ; the matter was taken up by the Queen, and for a time the ruin of the Grand Equerry appeared imminent.

Such was one account of the matter. The Tuscan Secretary, Ammirato, gave a more definite colour to the transaction. According to him the plot, whatever it was, had been revealed to the Regent and the Chancellor by a Spaniard introduced by the papal Nuncio. This man reported that certain persons he named were implicated in a design, by means of a mirror, to inspire the Queen with love, and thus to gain control over her will. Moisset and Bellegarde were denounced as guilty ; and Guise, at this time closely allied to the latter, hurried to Normandy, where his friend was, to bring him to Paris to answer to the charge. Bellegarde, as might have been expected, indignantly asserted his innocence, and, going with Guise to the Queen, told her plainly that his birth and position should have safeguarded him from doubts which were mere inventions of his enemies, and that, should his honour be attacked, he would know how to take vengeance.

Guise, in still more violent language, declared that M. le Grand's true offence lay in the fact that he was his friend; that if this was to be the way in which affairs were conducted and his ruin projected, he would die sword in hand, and others should be involved in his destruction, with more of the same kind; and though, some days later, he made a species of apology for the lack of respect he had shown the Regent, it was accompanied by reiteration of his complaints and of his determination that others should suffer by his ruin.

His impassioned partisanship of Bellegarde, as well as his violent denunciation of the forces at work against himself, was of course a declaration of war against Marie, and as such the Queen, as she answered him coldly, must have understood it.

In the end the question of sorcery was passed over, the charge against Moisset was made to deal with the more material crime of false coinage, and that against the Grand Equerry tacitly withdrawn. The Parlement had taken cognisance of the affair; but that body was not to be trusted where d'Ancre was concerned; and he was ultimately persuaded that it was more to his interest to allow the matter to drop than to risk an adverse verdict. The suit was removed from the official records and burnt. There was no further question of consulting the magic mirror—M. Zeller believes it may have been a case of hypnotic suggestion—and Bellegarde continued to fill his post in the King's household as before.

An incident occurring in the course of the affair had shown the excitable condition of the Paris of that day. A soldier of the guard, accused of connection with the coiners, had taken flight, pursued by those charged with the duty of apprehending him. The words they shouted after the fugitive were misunderstood ; it was said that the King had been killed like his father ; in a moment the streets were filled with a weeping and sobbing crowd ; the gates of the city were shut and an immense multitude collected at the Louvre. Even at the palace itself the report was widely believed ; Louis was out driving at the moment ; his mother, though affecting incredulity, was terror-struck ; nor was it until the King reached home and was heard demanding that his dinner should be brought in forthwith that her anxiety was allayed. On the following morning the boy was taken to Mass at Notre Dame, that he might be shown, safe and sound, to the people, who received him with affectionate acclamation.

For the rest, the whole episode had done no more than show the violent antagonism of the various parties at Court. Moisset was acquitted of the charges brought against him ; and the fact that, with a total lack of decency and decorum, d'Ancre had, before the trial took place, put in a claim to the property of the accused in case of his condemnation, increased the dislike entertained for him. The Queen, too, was considered to have shown partiality, and forfeited a portion of the popularity she could ill spare. Hints of coming trouble were thrown out in the communications of the Tuscan Resident to his Government ; and, quoting the opinion of men acquainted with Louis's disposition and character, he looked forward to a time, not more than four or five years distant, when his mother would have lost all authority over him. Hasty, hot-tempered, and wilful, it was thought not impossible that, under the influence

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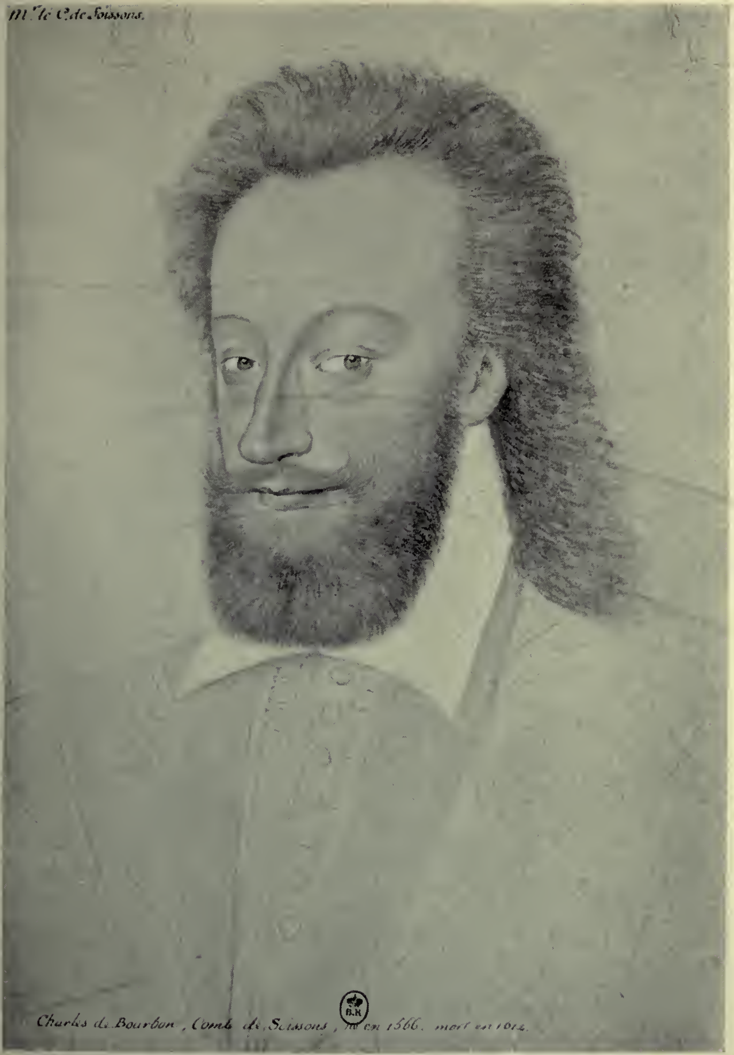
Mr le Cte de Soissons.
Charles de Bourbon, Comte de Soissons, né en 1566. mort en 1612.
B.N.

Photo by A. Giraudon, after a contemporary drawing in the Bibliothèque National.

CHARLES DE BOURBON,
Comte de Soissons.

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of the Princes or others opposed to the Queen, he would evince a desire to take the government upon himself.

"In an interview I had with the Marquise d'Ancre," he added, "I divined that neither she nor the Queen is far from entertaining some such suspicion." The suspicion was to be amply justified.

The autumn was stormy; all the great nobles were malcontent. Most of them, after their fashion if they felt they had a special grievance against the Regent, were withdrawing to the provinces; another cause for anxiety was supplied by the attitude of the Protestant party, who, their apprehensions quickened by the Spanish alliance, were showing a spirit of insubordination, if not sedition. Nothing was incredible to the common people; the expulsion of the adherents of the Religion from France was believed by them to be in contemplation, and the Huguenot nobles had their own reasons for distrust. Things were in this condition when one chief factor of disquietude was removed by the death of the Comte de Soissons from smallpox. With him the most turbulent spirit passed away and the party of the Princes of the Blood was deprived of its practical head. His son was a child; Conti was of no account; and only Condé remained. The important government of Normandy, which Soissons had held, was reclaimed by the Regent in the name of her second son, and she could breathe more freely.

During the summer the quarrels of the Queen with Vendôme, and his absences from Paris, will have left Louis often without the companionship he was accustomed to find in him. For this he probably cared little. Lonely now, the King was destined to be lonely all his life. Yet some few there were amongst those around him whom he loved and trusted. It has been seen that he was attached to Bellegarde. When, a year or two later, he was told of the death of the Chevalier de Guise, he turned pale and expressed his grief at the loss of a man closely associated with his daily life.

"He was always with me," he said. "I never went hunting without him."

Amongst his attendants at Saint-Germain he had singled out his first usher, Birat, and a soldier of the guard, named Descluseaux, as objects of affection; and his principal valet, a German named Beringhen, had been in his service from his infancy. "He says M. de Beringhen's name very well," recorded Héroard when he was two years old, and twenty-seven years later, when he was thought to be dying and all around were waiting for the end and calculating its possible results, it was from Beringhen's hand alone that, distrustful of every one else, he would take nourishment—a melancholy proof of what those twenty-seven years were to hold for the boy at present the centre of so much thought and care.

Meantime, at eleven years old and with the dignity of an affianced husband added to his other claims to consideration, he continued to be subjected to strict discipline, and the whip was in force. If he preferred, at times, to abide the consequences of resistance to lawful authority than to obey, it may be that Souvré, remembering that his charge was advancing towards majority, called to mind an admonition Louis had once addressed to him. Having declined to say his prayers, the Queen had directed the *gouverneur* to enforce devotion with the rod. It must be done, the King had admitted, with a fine show of impartiality, since such was his mother's command; "but take care," he added, "not to hit me hard." On another occasion, somewhat later, the Duc de Bouillon, as Marshal of France, was called upon to arrange a treaty of peace. Souvré and his pupil had had a quarrel, giving rise to just apprehension on the part of the latter that the whip would be applied. Alleging that Souvré was in a passion—which was not improbably true—Louis demanded that the Duke should cause him to take an oath that he would never more give way to anger and would forget all that was past.

Bouillon, with his own reservations, obeyed. "M. de Souvré, lift your hand," he ordered. "You promise never to be angry so long as the King conducts himself well?"

The *gouverneur's* pledge given, Bouillon turned to Louis.

"And you, Sire, lift your hand. You promise always to conduct yourself well?"

The King took the oath. It may be doubted whether it was kept by either *gouverneur* or pupil.

The rod was not the sole means by which his offences were brought home to the culprit; and, when once he had firmly refused to take physic, he was quick to perceive in the hearing of those who attended his *lever* the result of the Queen's directions.

"The Queen, my mother, has ordered that I am to be kept in disgrace (*que l'on me fasse la mine*)," he grumbled to Mademoiselle de Vendôme. "They would all be very much astonished if I were to keep them in disgrace" ; then, addressing himself in particular to the old Duchesse de Guise, " Eh bien ! Madame de Guise," he asked her, "are you one of those who are keeping me in disgrace?" and, making a face at her, turned away.

The year closed in peace. Louis and his sister spent New Year's Eve in making butter-cakes in Madame's apartment; and so 1612 ended. The opening of the New Year was marked by a bloody incident giving little promise of future tranquillity.

CHAPTER XXII

1613

Murder of the Baron de Luz—Its motives and its effect at Court—Marie reconciled with the Guises—Louis intervenes in a criminal case—His spirit of justice—d'Ancre in temporary disgrace—He is made Marshal of France—Peace or war?

"THE Baron de Luz killed by the Chevalier de Guise, at the entrance to the rue de Grenelle. The King has a French comedy performed." Thus runs the entry in Héroard's Journal for January 5, 1613. It is his solitary reference to an event which had set Paris aflame.

The Chevalier was the youngest of the Guise brothers, hot-headed and violent. Accounts of his performance differed, according as the writer inclined to the Guise faction or to their opponents. By some it was represented as a more or less fairly conducted fight, by others it was regarded rather in the light of an assassination. What was certain was that the affair had been deliberately planned. Luz had not lost his life owing to any outbreak of passion. It was also generally considered that he had not been given a fair chance of defending himself. It was affirmed that Guise, young, strong, armed, and accompanied, had laid wait for an old man with the purpose of putting him to death, and had accomplished the deed without allowing his antagonist time to draw his sword from the scabbard. If Malherbe, who recorded the occurrence on the day it happened, is to be trusted, this account of the matter was exaggerated, but it is plain that the Chevalier was considered to have taken his foe at a disadvantage; and the Queen—no enemy to the Guises—was filled with horror and indignation, and spoke with sarcastic scorn of the courage shown in slaying a defenceless old man without so much as crying "Gare." Such, she said to Bassompierre, in an access of indiscreet wrath, were the tricks of the family.

The crime was ascribed to various causes. Guise himself alleged, as a pretext, that de Luz had boasted that he had had a share in the murder of the Duke, his father. Others asserted that the Baron had been in possession of dangerous secrets of the Guise party, and was judged best out of the way; it was stated, again, that he had incurred the resentment of Bellegarde and his adherents, in league with the house of Lorraine, by intrigues with d'Ancre, and that the Chevalier was chosen as the instrument of vengeance. The murder has been also considered the result of jealous passion. According to Malherbe, a lady to whom the Chevalier appears to have been paying court described a scene taking place the previous evening; when, making love to her at the palace, young Guise had boasted that he was the wood of which Marshals of France were fashioned, the lady replying lightly that it was very dry wood. Later on, she had noticed that he was watching de Luz with a malevolent eye, and had asked him what was the matter. The Baron, she added, in jest or earnest, was her lover, and the Chevalier must do him no harm.

"I would rather have an arm broken than that he should wed you," Guise had answered hotly.

Possibly Madame la Comtesse was one of the women who would willingly believe themselves the motive of a crime. Possibly jealousy had in truth its share in the murder, and had combined with other causes to direct the Chevalier's conduct. It remained—a more important question so far as the public was concerned—to determine upon the treatment of the culprit, belonging as he did to a house well able to safeguard its members from punishment. Upon this question opinions naturally differed widely. The foes of the house of Lorraine were eager to avail themselves of the opportunity to damage it, even advising that the outrage should be avenged upon the persons of the Dukes of Épernon and Guise—the one the ally, the other the brother, of the delinquent—when they presented themselves at the palace. Such counsels savoured of madness, and were at once rejected by the Queen, who resolved, more wisely, to proceed against the Chevalier by legal methods.

Meantime, notwithstanding the Duc de Guise's disavowal of his brother's action and his protestations that he had known nothing of it, violence of language on one side was met by equal violence on the other. Condé and d'Ancre, to whose party the dead man had belonged, and who were at the time in opposition to the Guises, were urgent in their demand for vengeance. The Guise faction made a parade of indifference, declaring openly that the Chevalier had done no more than his duty in putting to death a man concerned in his father's death. The dowager Duchess, indignant at reflections upon her son, spoke with so much insolence of or to the Queen herself that Madame de Guercheville bade her boldly have a care—the Queen was her mistress, no less than the mistress of others. To which the Duchess replied, with more fury than before, that she had no mistress save the Virgin Mary.

The Queen had no doubt acted prudently in leaving the law to take its course. The misfortune was that the law did not take it. The ministers responsible for putting its machinery in motion, though willing enough to do their duty, were well aware of the strength of the party opposed to them ; and delay after delay was interposed, rousing the Regent to so much anger that she contemplated removing the great seal from Sillery and placing it in more efficient and less timid hands. There was also talk of Épernon's arrest. Had d'Ancre and his friends struck whilst the iron was hot, the ministers might have fallen. But disputes arose respecting the choice of a successor to the Chancellor, should he be removed, and the opportunity was lost.

The situation was critical. The Regent presently found that she stood almost alone, alienated alike from her ministers and from Épernon, once her chief support, whilst Guise had succeeded in making up his quarrel with Condé and his party, and boasted that, when the Queen should in future be angry, the Prince would no longer be a rod wherewith to chastise him. Even d'Ancre had ranged himself on the side of the cabal, and, if she opposed its members, was against her.

This was the condition of things a week after the Baron de Luz's murder. At that time Guise, meeting

Bassompierre, told him that the Queen's hardness of heart had frozen his own, hitherto impassioned in her service. She could have made him do more by a word than the rest of the world by benefits. He had, however, suffered overmuch neglect, and had changed his master and taken another—namely, the Prince and his cabal. One day the Queen would learn her mistake, and it would only be at a high price that she would buy him back.

Such was the bitter complaint of the brother of the murderer. Bassompierre felt that something must be done. Belonging to no party save that of King and Queen, "paroissien de celui qui sera curé," he was a fit go-between, and, having made his report to the Regent, was commissioned by her to offer a propitiatory gift to Guise of 100,000 crowns, to which, upon his suggestion, she added the recall of La Rochefoucauld—banished from Paris on account of his hot partisanship of the Chevalier—an important gift for his sister, the Princesse de Conti, and, stranger still, the Lieutenant-Generalship of Provence for the Chevalier. Guise allowed himself to be persuaded, on these terms, to consent to a reconciliation with the Court; the ministers were included in the pacification; Épernon, in marked contrast to most of the participants in the arrangement, agreed to forget his grievances—since the Queen was wife and mother of his two masters, dead and living—only stipulating that nothing should be offered him in return, and that the Regent should treat her faithful servants better for the future. All were satisfied, save the Prince de Condé, his personal adherents, the Concini, and the young Baron de Luz, who, seeing little hope of obtaining justice, took the matter into his own hands, sent a challenge to his father's murderer, and, meeting him in fair fight, was slain.

The result of this supplementary tragedy was singular. Guise became forthwith a hero in public estimation, and was, in the language of a contemporary, lauded as a Mars. Even Bassompierre was taken by surprise by the suddenness of the reaction in his favour. The Chevalier having slain the father, the Parlement had been ordered to take cognisance of the deed, to inquire into it, and to set on foot an action against him. Less than a week later, with the blood of the dead man's son in addition on his hands, the Queen sent to visit him and to learn how his wounds were progressing.

Throughout the affair the Duc de Guise had displayed prudence and moderation ; had shown, or pretended, disapproval of his brother's conduct, and had risen in the estimation of the world to a degree causing no little uneasiness to the Regent. The episode is worth recording in detail, representing as it does the main character and features of this stage of the Regency.

At the very time that Bassompierre was hurrying from the Queen to Guise, and from Guise to Sillery and his colleagues, in the endeavour to compose matters, the boy-King, in his part of the palace, was also preoccupied by a criminal case which had likewise been referred to the decision of the Parlement. In the eyes of the Court it would have been of the smallest possible consequence, the question being merely whether an insignificant country-woman should or should not suffer the capital penalty. But Louis took a different view of the affair.

Riding home from hunting on a certain January day, not a week after de Luz's murder, a woman, probably on her way to the prison to which she was to be consigned, flung herself at his feet, imploring mercy. Condemned at Senlis, on the charge of having caused the death of her unborn child, she had appealed to the Parlement, and had consequently been brought to Paris to abide its sentence.

Having listened to her story and weighed the facts in a judicial spirit remarkable in a child of eleven, the King gave his orders. She was to be kept in a place apart, and not taken to the Conciergerie until such time as he had conferred with his mother.

"The Parlement would put her to death," he told Souvré, and was, likely enough, right.

Louis was determined that, if he could compass it, she should be saved. Nor was he acting upon any blind impulse of compassion; judging and considering the evidence, so far as he was acquainted with it, with care. The proofs of the death were not, he said, certain; the woman had been condemned upon conjecture. Lest his influence with the Queen should not be sufficient, he begged that Souvré and Bassompierre would likewise add their intercessions, and sent his nurse to ask the Marquise d'Ancre to persuade his mother to bestow a pardon upon the culprit.

He had put forward the arguments in her favour earnestly, "avec passion," and, having taken his measures, remained wrapped in uneasy thought.

"Ceci me met en peine," he told Souvré suddenly and almost with tears; continuing for some days his efforts to effect his purpose, and, after they had been attended with success, taking care that money was supplied to his protégée, and that she was enabled to return to her home in the country.

The trouble and thought Louis expended on the affair were curiously at variance with the spirit of the Court. Nor was it a solitary instance of that love of justice and fair dealing afterwards winning him the title of *le Juste.* He refused to recognise, as those around him would have had him do, the privilege of a King to override the rights of his subjects. Thus, the owner of some pigeons having declined to give them up, Luynes would have had him take them by force. Everything, urged other courtiers present, belonged to the King. Let him have the birds seized.

The boy listened, according to his wont, in silence. When at length he spoke, it was not to express his acquiescence in the course suggested.

"Take an archer," he ordered Luynes, "and bid that man bring me four pigeons. Say I will pay him more than their value."

Willingly or unwillingly, the command was obeyed. The recalcitrant possessor of the birds was introduced into the King's presence, and, instead of the forty sous at which he valued them, received a crown.

The partial pacification following upon the pardon of the Chevalier de Guise left the Court merry. There were plays and ballets and dancing, the Prince's cabal alone holding aloof. Bassompierre, as the instrument of the Queen's reconciliation with the house of

Lorraine and with Épernon, was in special favour with her, and, when Condé left him out from an entertainment to which all the rest of the Court was bidden, Marie invited him to a private party of her own. It was true that he had to pay for her kindness by declining to attend a ball at the house of the Duc de Longueville to which the Regent herself had not been asked ; but, though he felt the price to be heavy, there were manifest advantages to be reaped from the enjoyment of the favour of the head of the Government. D'Ancre, under a temporary cloud, had retired, at the Queen's suggestion, to his post as Governor of Amiens ; and she sent him a message that she would teach him obedience ; adding that, were it not for his wife, he would have gone to a place he would not have been able to quit at his will. If sceptics doubted whether the Queen's severity was genuine or assumed, the disgrace of the favourite, real or pretended, contributed to the gaiety of those he left behind.

During the summer the Queen was afforded a welcome distraction from cares of State by the success of one of the matrimonial arrangements in which she was always engaged. Having failed to marry young Montmorency to any of her Italian nieces, she had succeeded in contriving a match between him and the daughter of her kinsman, Virgilio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano. Married in Italy by proxy, the bride was sent to France and consigned to the care of the Queen until the arrival in Paris of the bridegroom two or three weeks later. Marie's satisfaction was great. A rumour had been afloat, ascribed by her to the malice of Condé, to the effect that the Princess was deformed, and relief possibly mingled with her gratification when the story proved to be false. Though endowed with no remarkable beauty, it was the general opinion that age and development would improve the girl's appearance, and Montmorency, on his arrival, showed no dissatisfaction with his bride, who had meantime been arrayed in French fashion so that she might appear to advantage. The Queen and King were present at the introduction of bride and bridegroom, and all went well, save that the little Chevalier de Souvré, having intruded himself surreptitiously where he was not wanted, underwent corporal punishment in consequence.

A more important matter claimed Marie's attention whenever she had leisure to bestow upon it. This was the projected betrothal of her own daughter Christine to the Prince of Wales; but though ambassadors came and went, and the preliminaries of the match were much under discussion, the affair made little progress.

In the meantime the species of disgrace in which d'Ancre had remained at Amiens had suddenly come to an end, and he had returned to resume his place at Court. A reconciliation with Épernon and Guise followed, and it was plain that he had fully regained his former place in the Queen's favour. On November 19 the seal was put to a matter of public scandal and he took the oath as Marshal of France—an honour conferred upon him by the Regent with a total disregard of the sentiments aroused by the appointment to the highest dignity in the French army of a foreigner who not only had never served in it, but in view of whose antecedents it was necessary to abolish the ancient custom of reciting before the Parlement his titles to the distinction.

No one had power to gainsay the will of the Queen; and in the presence of the young King, who had never disguised his dislike for his mother's favourite, d'Ancre took the oath, making a speech in humble acknowledgment of the benefits conferred upon a foreigner who had come empty-handed to France. The King listened and, perhaps, contemplated a day when the dignity of France would be no longer prostituted as at present.

It had been observed, with some uneasiness, by those about him during the previous months, that Louis had become subject to a melancholy unnatural at his age, and efforts were made to provide him with amusement to distract his mind. Whether the illuminations and displays of fireworks had the desired effect does not appear; it was perhaps partly in consequence of his moods of depression that the Queen was beginning to reconsider the sentence of banishment she had passed upon the Chevalier de Vendôme, and to contemplate his recall before Louis's majority should enable him, by no grace of her own, to recover the society of his favourite playmate. It was not, however, till three years later that the Chevalier was to return to Court.

It would be tedious, as well as impossible within the limits of the present volume, to follow in detail the shifting combinations of parties at this period. If one element of turbulence had been removed in Soissons, Condé, avaricious and grasping and anxious to accumulate as much wealth as possible during the King's minority, was always advancing fresh demands, and was pressing for the important governments of Bordeaux and Château-Trompette. The grants of money intended to soften the refusal of posts which, had they passed into his possession, would have strengthened his position to a dangerous degree, did not avail to propitiate him and his party. They therefore withdrew in a body to their several provinces, whence they only returned when the important question of peace or war arose and rendered their presence in Paris necessary.

That question had been raised in consequence of a dispute between Mantua and Savoy, following upon the death of the Duke of Mantua. The Regent took the side of the former, connected with her family, and at one moment it seemed likely that recourse would be had to arms, and that France would be involved in the struggle. Assisting at a Council held for the consideration of the matter, Louis listened to his mother as she gave her voice in favour of a warlike policy and expressed his concurrence.

"Madame," he said, "I am very glad. War must be made."

His hopes were, however, again doomed to disappointment, and, by France at least, the affair was allowed to drop. It must have been plain that her present condition was not one rendering it desirable that she should intervene in foreign quarrels.

CHAPTER XXIII

1614

The Prince and his friends leave Paris—Nevers seizes Mezières—Contrary counsels—Condé's manifesto—Negotiations—Uneasiness at Paris—Louis at the Council-board—Peace signed—Vendôme rebellious—The Prince at Poitiers—Court to go to Orléans.

IT must have been clear to the least observant that the continual friction between the Regent and the nobles would not be long in assuming a more acute character; that open and avowed conflict was not far off, when the smouldering animosity of the Prince and his adherents would burst into flame. The policy hitherto pursued by Marie—"yielding to the waves to avoid the shipwreck"—had been a desperate one. It could not, moreover, be carried on for an indefinite period. Posts, honours, money, had been given as sops to the malcontents, and still they were not satisfied. The Treasury, filled by the economies of Henri-Quatre and Sully, had been emptied, and emptied to no purpose; it would soon be no longer possible to offer bribes of sufficient value to quiet Condé and his partisans. Force would be necessary as a last resort, and the question was who would prove strongest.

In the coming struggle Condé, by position and rank, would hold the position of leader of those opposed to the Government. The Regent on the one side, the Princes of the Blood—of whom Condé was for the moment practically the sole representative—on the other—this was the situation ; and an almanack, appearing at the beginning of the year 1614, struck the note of warning. The King's death was predicted, misfortunes were to befall the Queen ; and prosperity awaited the Prince de Condé. The conjunction of the three prophecies was not reassuring. Timid people took alarm. It was not a time when such matters could be treated with contempt ; and the author of the forecasts expiated his imprudence in the galleys. Condé was known to be acquainted with the culprit ; and Louis, having heard of the book, was said to have complained of it bitterly to the Prince.

In the autumn the King's minority would end ; time was therefore short, if his mother were to be coerced and intimidated into acceding to the demands of the opposition. Early in the year, accordingly, the Prince and his adherents decided upon repeating, in an accentuated form, the step by which they were wont to mark their dissatisfaction with the conduct of affairs, and withdrew in a body to the provinces. Condé, Mayenne, and Nevers went first, taking leave of King and Queen with due decorum ; the Prince adding a perfunctory pledge, imposing on no one, that he would return whensoever the King might summon him. Bouillon, left behind to offer an explanation to the Chancellor before following his confederates, used plain language. He told Sillery that the Prince and his friends were forced, by the bad government of the country, to put an end to the ill before it should grow incurable ;

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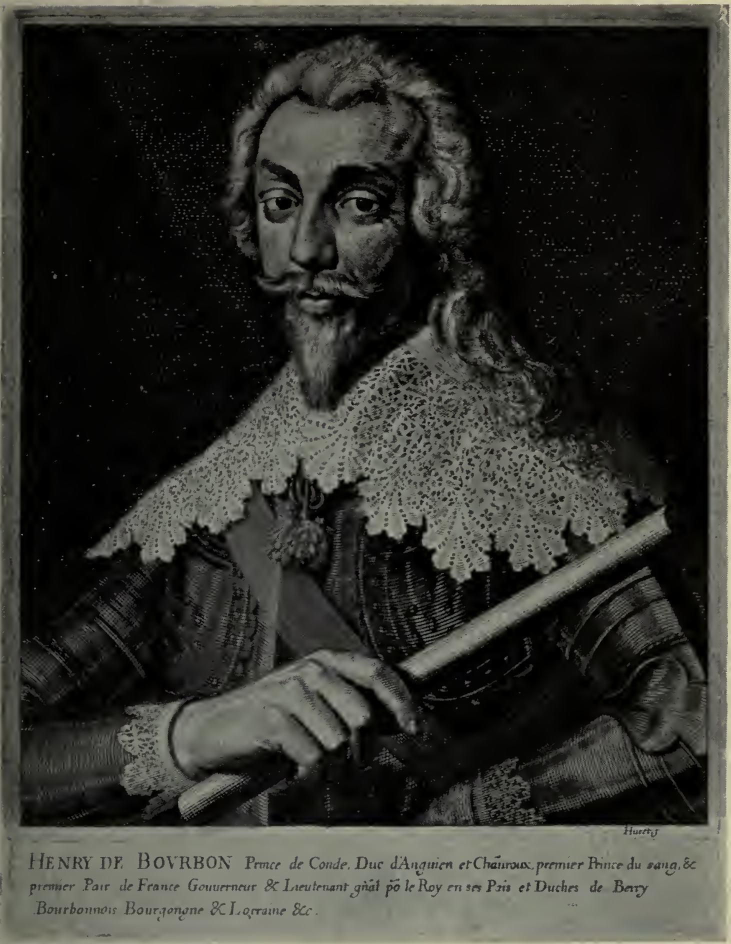
Huret f
HENRY DE BOVRBON Prince de Conde, Duc d'Anguien et Chāuroux, premier Prince du sang, & premier Pair de France Gouuerneur & Lieutenant gnāl pō le Roy en ses Pais et Duches de Berry Bourbonnois Bourgongne & Lorraine &c.

From an engraving by Huret.

HENRY DE BOURBON,
Prince de Condé.

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and that Condé had determined to make a representation on the subject to the Regent, and would, with that object, hold an unarmed assembly of those who shared his views, and submit their protest to her. After which, and before he could be arrested, in accordance with the determination arrived at, Bouillon hastened to join his friends. The lad, Longueville, followed ; and lastly Vendôme—who had been placed under surveillance at the Louvre, in the expectation that he would not remain behind—escaping from the guard who had him in charge, fled to his government of Brittany, where, supported by the Duc de Retz, a local potentate, he set to work to collect troops and to fortify one or two of the strongholds of the province ; writing to the King to recapitulate his grievances and to justify his conduct.

He had been bidden, he said, by the Queen, in Louis's presence not to leave Paris without permission ; had obeyed, but had nevertheless been subsequently made a prisoner. Ten days later God, treating him according to the purity of his intentions, had set him at liberty and, taking him by the hand, had enabled him to reach his own domains, where he found himself threatened with being deprived of his government.

All of which the Duke felt that he had a right to resent.

The next move was made by Nevers, who took forcible possession of the citadel of Mezières, on the plea of his rights as governor of the province. Overcoming the resistance opposed to him, he sent to inform the Queen of its capture, as though it had been rescued from the enemy ; announcing his purpose of holding the fortress for the King, and declaring that he was ready to surrender it to any one Louis should appoint.

Notwithstanding his expressions of loyalty and submission, the act could not be interpreted otherwise than as displaying an intention of preparing for a struggle, and when the news reached Paris excitement was great. Marie, seized with panic, had thoughts of resigning the Regency. Some of the Council were in favour of the step, others against it. Amongst these last d'Ancre was naturally prominent. Were power to pass from the Queen he must have known that his day would be over ; and it was determined that she should continue to hold the reins of government.

It had next to be decided whether the rebels should be approached by means of negotiation and diplomacy or resort should be had to arms. Marie spoke of proceeding to Mezières with troops, of setting forth at once with the King to reduce Nevers to submission. Villeroy and the President Jeannin, who had succeeded Sully in the charge of the finances, were in favour of active measures. Sillery, the Chancellor, advocated conciliation. The Queen, he pointed out, save for the Guises and Épernon, stood almost alone ; the Huguenots were powerful, and, a woman and a child being at the head of affairs, caution was necessary. Supported by the Concini, the Chancellor prevailed.

The Prince, meanwhile, had issued a manifesto justifying his conduct as an attempt to reform the disorders of the kingdom, to be accomplished, if possible, by peaceful methods, recourse to be had to arms solely should that step be necessary in the interests of the King ;

and demanding, in conclusion, that the States-General should be convened. Under these circumstances, the Queen made the grave mistake of parleying with the rebels. It was true that warlike preparations were also in progress; fresh levies of Swiss were made, and the reserves were called out. But, pending the completion of military arrangements—to take effect in case conciliation should fail—de Thou was dispatched to confer with Condé and his partisans, taking leave of the King on March 1.

"Go and tell *ces messieurs-là* to be very good," said the boy, placing his two hands upon the shoulders of the envoy, as he bade him adieu. It would have been better to have taken steps to enforce their good behaviour.

Civil war seemed within measurable distance. The two parties were armed, and were showing every disposition to increase their strength. It was easy for the Princes to use the language of loyalty, to hoist the white flag and cross, and to declare that, if they took up arms, or even went further, it was only to serve the King; their meaning was well understood, and the fact that the Huguenots appeared to be inclined to give them their support was a dangerous feature of the struggle.

The Regent was taking her measures, and on April 10 the King reviewed in person the two companies of cavalry usually commanded by Nevers, now confided to the more trustworthy hands of Praslin. Paris itself was not considered safe, and orders were issued that when Louis left the palace he should be accompanied by an armed escort. Informed that such was his mother's command, the boy was manifestly disturbed.

"The Parisians will think that I am afraid," he said. "I am not afraid. I do not fear them"—meaning the confederated nobles. "If they should come, should we not beat them?"

"Sire," was the answer, "they would take us at great disadvantage. It would be to oppose a cloth doublet to one of steel."

After some thought, the King bowed to necessity.

"*Bien*," he said, "but tell them to wear their cloaks over their arms as they pass through the city."

Louis was eager for the resort to force which his mother and her advisers were so anxious to avoid. "The King," Malherbe had written in February, "displays an extreme desire to go to war, and the day before yesterday he had himself armed at all points, and felt so much satisfaction at finding himself thus equipped that, on being put to bed, he would not take off his helmet, and argued for long that he would sleep better thus than wearing his night-cap. At length, however, he yielded to remonstrance and took it off." His little cousin, Soissons, was no less eager to be up and doing. He wished to go and fight, but would, he said, obey none but the King. To his mother's representations that he was not yet strong enough, he replied that war was nothing but knowing how to kill a man, and he was well able to do that.

Changes were taking place in the conduct of affairs. Louis was beginning to appear at the Council-board. The ministers, as well as the Queen, though they might have been slow to desire his presence there, had awakened to the fact that he was advancing towards his majority, and that their best chance of retaining power after that event was to gain his ear before it. All was uncertain, the future largely dependent upon the development of a child's mind and tastes, and whilst every care was taken to shape them to the advantage of those in authority, the one factor which was to prove all-important in the coming years—namely, the influence of De Luynes—was unsuspected.

Notwithstanding the small amount of encouragement Louis had received to occupy himself with public questions, he was giving signs of having formed opinions of his own. Those opinions, with regard to the present crisis, were not in accord with his mother's. Under the influence of her chosen advisers, the Regent remained strongly in favour of her policy of conciliation. Louis would have adopted a bolder one; and when the question of concessions was under discussion at the Council-board, he gave his voice against yielding to the demands put forward by Condé and his friends.

Those demands were indeed extravagant. A hundred thousand crowns were to indemnify the Prince for expenses incurred in what had been scarcely less than rebellion. A stronghold was to be placed in his hands; another to be entrusted to Bouillon. None of the confederates were without a claim. Peace was to be bought at a high price.

Whoever might be willing to purchase it by these means, Louis was not. Entering unaccompanied the chamber where the Council were engaged in considering the matter, he addressed the Queen in language making his wishes plain. Amboise, he said—the fortress coveted by the Prince—ought not to be made over to him. "If he wishes to come to terms," he said, "let him come to terms."

The Queen was manifestly displeased.

"Sire, who has advised you thus?" she asked. "That man desires neither your welfare nor that of the kingdom."

Making no reply to the question, Louis reiterated his wishes.

"My mother," he said, "by no means give him that stronghold. Let the Prince do as he likes."

With these words he left the Council-chamber. "Such," says M. Zeller, "was the first official and deliberate manifestation of the political will of Louis XIII. The young King wanted unconditional obedience. He was ready to go and enforce it."

Paris, no more than the Regent, shared the King's views. With a vivid recollection of former civil strife, the capital longed for peace. Already the possibility of war had caused the price of provisions to rise. From the provinces came reports of devastation wrought by the soldiery. As the negotiations proceeded, anxiety intensified. In the churches the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, and the people prayed for a peaceful solution. Great was the joy and relief when it became known that a solution had been reached. On May 14 the Prince de Condé declared himself satisfied with the concessions obtained from the Queen, and the appeal to arms was at least postponed. After many resolutions and counter-resolutions and much discussion, a treaty had been signed embodying the terms agreed upon. The States-General were to be called together ; a general disarmament was to take place on both sides, and the royal marriages were to be suspended. The future had once again been mortgaged for the sake of present tranquillity.

That night, when the King was in bed, Bellegarde whispered the news in his ear, the boy characteristically giving no sign of grief, joy, or satisfaction, and continuing his conversation as before. When, however, most of the company had withdrawn, he showed that he had not failed to appreciate the tidings at their true importance.

"Peace is made," he told the two attendants who had remained with him. "I think it is owing to the prayers of the Forty Hours."

When, on the following Sunday, an envoy arrived from the Prince bringing a letter addressed to the King in person, Louis again showed a sense of the gravity of the occasion. Causing M. de Souvré to be summoned, he had the messenger introduced into his presence in due form, receiving from him his master's missive, together with the assurance that the Prince kissed the King's hands and was his very humble servant.

Louis's answer was made in few words ; after which, having read the letter, he merely observed to Souvré that he wished to hear Vespers at the Cordeliers and left the palace without further speech with the envoy. He was learning discretion.

A fortnight later the young Duc de Longueville—he was no more than nineteen—came to offer his submission to the King ; "making him some little harangue," wrote Malherbe, "and the King a still briefer response." The Duke afterwards paid his respects to the Queen, whose mask concealed from the curious any sentiments which might have been legible on her countenance as she received the ex-rebel. To his deep obeisances she responded by signing to him to rise; asked whence he had travelled that day, and added that his beard was growing and should be cut. He was accorded a pension of 33,000 crowns and must have been satisfied with the result of his misdemeanours.

Mayenne came next, well escorted, was given a cordial welcome at Court and the promise of the hand of the King's sister, Catherine de Vendôme, with a splendid dowry. He, too, had reason to be content.

The rest of the chief confederates remained at a distance, though profuse in their professions of loyalty. It was said that Condé did not intend to return to Paris until the attainment of the King's majority. Vendôme was openly dissatisfied with the turn affairs had taken. He had held aloof from the peace conferences, and, though included in the general pacification, stayed in his government of Brittany, having put himself still further in the wrong by opening dispatches addressed to the Duc de Montbazon, thus making himself, in the words of the Regent, guilty of high treason for the sake of a piece of paper. Disregarding the terms of the treaty concluded between the Queen and the Prince, he continued to carry on a species of guerilla warfare in his government; and, writing to Marie in no penitent spirit, said that he asked

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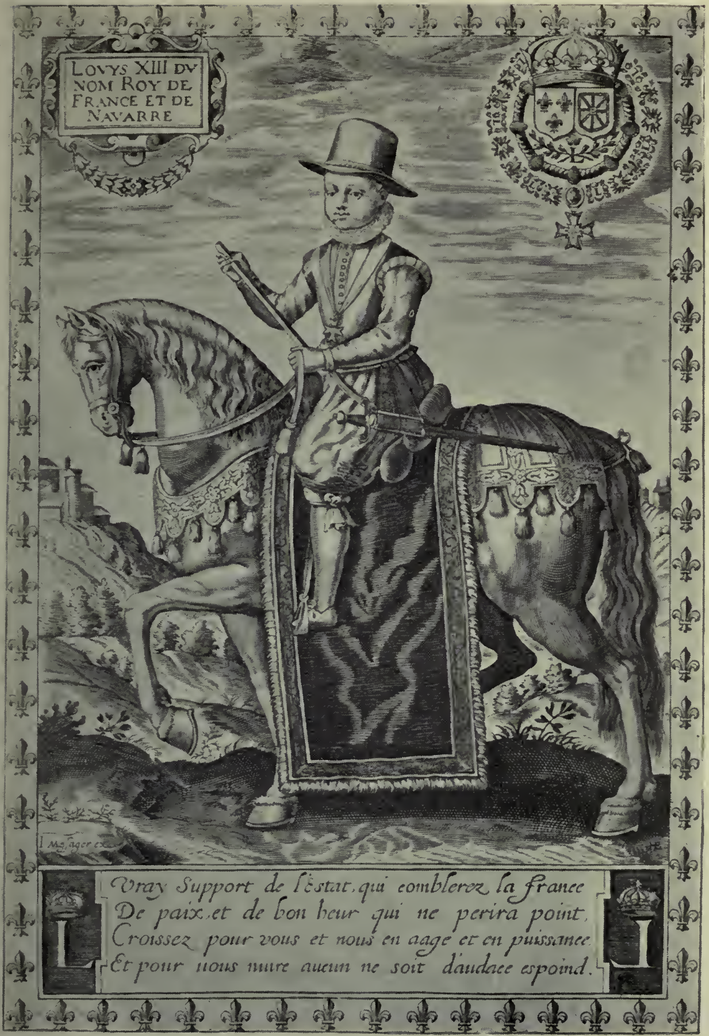
LOVYS XIII DV NOM ROY DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE
I Messager exc.
Vray Support de l'estat, qui comblerez la france
De paix, et de bon heur qui ne perira point,
Croissez pour vous et nous en aage et en puissance
Et pour nous nuire aucun ne soit d'audace espoind.
L
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From an engraving by L. Messager.

LOUIS XIII.

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neither favours nor graces, but simply not to be driven to desperation by the antagonism of his irreconcilable foes. If he had opened Montbazon's dispatches, it had been in conformity with his duty, as governor of Brittany, of examining all papers dealing with that province.

Vendôme's conception of his duty was not likely to be shared at Paris. The King in especial, never over-fond of him, was indignant at the insolence of the action. Overheard talking in his sleep of the Bastille and asked what he had been dreaming of, he answered that he had been demanding why his brother of Vendôme had not been placed there.

"He opened the dispatches I sent to M. de Montbazon," he added with anger.

Vendôme, young and hot-headed, was at this juncture more opposed to peace than the rest of his party; and it is curious to contrast his attitude with the forecasts his father had hazarded as to his character and future, when discussing the matter shortly before his death. The position and training of the lad had been such that, according to the King's too sanguine anticipations, his conduct would always be good. The government of Brittany had been bestowed upon him in order to render him the stronger in the service of the King, and Henri had granted him precedence over Nemours, Guise, Nevers, and Longueville, so that he might be attached the more straitly to his sovereign. Should he ever forget himself, that day he should lose the distinction he enjoyed and should walk behind every one of them. The forecast was scarcely more than four years old. But Henri was gone, and, his strong hand removed, every one, Vendôme included, did as seemed right in their own eyes.

Ostensibly, the dispute between the Prince and the Court was ended. Amboise—against the King's wishes—had been made over to Condé and he had been paid the money he demanded. The country, nevertheless, continued in a disquieting condition, and, whilst the Prince answered for Vendôme's obedience, he supported him in demands to which the Regent was not disposed to agree. More complications followed, and before long a bitter complaint was received from the Prince himself. An envoy he had sent with a letter to Poitiers had not only been fired upon by the inhabitants under the leadership of the Bishop, but had been detained in confinement and threatened with death. Worse still, Condé having gone thither in person, he had been insolently refused entrance into the town, the militant Bishop again playing a principal part in the affair. The Queen's name had been freely used, and he called upon her to avenge the insult offered him.

When the Prince's letter reached the Queen, the Court was at Saint-Germain, where Louis was in full enjoyment of his favourite amusement of hunting; and it was at the château that the question of the measures to be taken to re-establish order more effectually than had hitherto been done was debated. The Council was again divided, but on this occasion—influenced possibly by the fact that Leonora d'Ancre was not at hand to press upon her counsels of peace—the Regent sided with those who were in favour of vigorous action, and who urged that, without further loss of time, the King and his mother should proceed, accompanied by an armed escort, to Orléans, where they would be near the scene of the disturbances. It was known that rumours were afloat in the provinces to the effect that Louis was delicate, that it was necessary to keep him in cotton-wool, and that for this reason he could never be at a distance from Paris, where he was constantly undergoing medical treatment. Appearances, it was said, pointed to the probability that his life would not be prolonged. The uncertainty as to the future thus engendered was a manifest evil, and Villeroy urged that he should be taken to visit the centres of sedition. The sight of him would dispel the mischievous reports ; the loyal would rally round him and the disaffected would withdraw. The presence of the King in person, at the head of an army, in the troubled districts would in itself produce a reassuring effect.

The arguments set forth prevailed, in spite of the opposition of d'Ancre and Sillery. The Queen had had experience of the lack of success attending the conciliatory methods she had hitherto employed. Peace might have been thereby nominally restored ; but the hollowness of the pacification was demonstrated by the fact that, at the present moment, Condé, pending the arrival of her answer to his complaint, was executing what he called justice in the district which had offended him, and Vendôme, still holding aloof in Brittany, had given no sign of submission. It was obvious that something must be done, and at a sitting of the Council on July 1 it was finally determined that the journey should be undertaken. Three thousand disciplined Swiss troops were at hand, and it was arranged that, together with his guards, they should accompany the King. By July 3 the Court had returned to Paris, preparatory to setting out, two days later, on the way to Orléans.

CHAPTER XXIV

1614

The journey—The Prince de Condé loses strength—The pleasures of the road—Louis as *bon compagnon*—The Court at Orléans, Tours, Poitiers, and Nantes—Vendôme makes his submission—Return to Paris—Louis's majority.

HER determination reached, the Queen refused to be turned from it. At Paris, as at Saint-Germain, it roused much opposition. During the day passed in the capital a remonstrance was presented to Louis by the Parlement, begging that he would not leave the capital, where his person was in greater security than elsewhere. Louis and his mother were, however, in full accord. Thanking the Parlement for its care and anxiety, he added that he desired to visit the country districts, and was resolved upon doing so. Supported by the Regent, no one had power to oppose him, and on the morrow he quitted Paris under the escort of four hundred horsemen. Épernon, in command of the guards, was to follow without delay; Mayenne was dispatched to announce to his former confederate, Condé, that Queen and King were on their way to Orléans and to summon him to meet them there.

For once Marie displayed boldness and resolution, and, if not free from misgivings, she did not waver in her purpose. As for the young King, the expedition must have been hailed with delight by a boy of twelve who, save on the solitary occasion of his coronation, had scarcely left the neighbourhood of Paris. Besides which, ignorant as he may have been of the full importance of the issues at stake, he knew enough of the situation to add the element of excitement to the pleasure of novelty. War, if not probable, was possible, and for war in any shape Louis had always shown a boy's eagerness.

To be ready for a fight was the best method of rendering it unlikely ; and full preparations had been made for the contingency of a resort to arms. It was computed that, in case of necessity, twenty thousand men could be placed, without delay, in the field. Munitions of war had been brought from Paris. Orléans possessed cannon of its own. The result of the measures taken was quickly apparent, the suddenness of the Queen's action rendering it the more effective. No one was, at the moment, in a position to resist the royal forces, and even Vendôme, the most contumacious of the confederated nobles, showed signs of submission.

It was true that Condé continued to maintain an ambiguous attitude, posing as an injured man with a right to demand justice. It was further known that he was instrumental in circulating reports damaging to the King, whom he described as hardly capable of mounting a horse and in no wise a sovereign to be desired. But his influence was manifestly on the decline, and, having obeyed the Queen's summons and reached Orléans the day before the Court was expected there, his reception was so cold that, without awaiting the King's arrival, he turned his back upon the town and betook himself elsewhere. Moreover, when, as Governor of Guienne, he wrote to say that he was to be looked for at Bordeaux the royal lieutenant commanding in that city, in conclave with bishop and magistrates, determined that, should he come, the gates should be shut against him. It was clear that the tide had turned and that, for the moment, the Prince had no chance against the authority of the Queen-Regent. Accepting his defeat, he disbanded the troops he had collected around him, and announced his intention of paying his respects to Louis and his mother, either on their return to Paris, or when the States-General should assemble. Such was the initial success attending the royal progress, and it must have gone far to strengthen the Queen's conviction that the step had been a wise one.

On the day after Condé had left Orléans in dudgeon, Louis made his entry into the city, on horseback, surrounded by nobles and greeted by joy-bells, salutes from the cannon, and illuminations. Not only at Orléans, but wherever he went he received a cordial welcome from the loyal amongst the provincial nobility ; the sight of the boy, as he rode through the towns which lay in his route and showed himself to the populace, was sufficient to give the lie to many of the mischievous reports concerning him. It was true that Sillery still urged retreat, endeavouring to persuade the Regent to return to Paris ; but, listening to wiser counsels, she determined to push forward and to continue her march through the regions where discontent had lately prevailed.

On leaving Orléans she directed her steps towards Tours, passing through Blois on her way. The journey was made by easy stages, and, enlivened by little adventures, afforded the King a pleasant variety to the ordinary routine of Court life. Brought up in a palace, and hedged round by conventional restraints, the most commonplace incidents—being wakened in the morning by the sounds of country traffic, or even the abuse levelled at each other by waggoners as they passed—had all the charm and amusement of novelty. The comparative freedom of the open road was a new experience, and the boy's spirits rose. Recalling, it may be, stories told of his father, and striving to emulate the gay bonhomie which had been one of Henri's characteristics—Louis, less fitted by nature for the part, would at times attempt to imitate him and to play the *bon compagnon.* Thus, passing one day an encampment, and learning that a certain Sieur de l'Isle Rouet was entertaining *al fresco* "the gormandizers of the Court," he announced his intention of making one of the party.

"Çà," he said, descending from his coach, "j'en veux être des goinfres de la cour"—proceeding to make away with two partridges, two breasts of chicken, and some tongue, before, with a gay "Adieu, mon hôte," to the giver of the feast, the uninvited guest re-entered his carriage and resumed his journey.

In more important matters all prospered. With every day it was becoming more certain that the Queen-Regent's tardy decision to show fight was destined to prove more efficacious in crushing disaffection than the policy of conciliation she had hitherto pursued. Condé, lately regarded as a grave menace to the royal authority, was increasingly isolated. He had attempted to renew relations with Sully, but Sully had only good advice to bestow upon him ; and, whilst he was attended by no more than four or five gentlemen, the Court was crowded by those who flocked to do honour to the King. The Huguenot party, ceasing to regard the Prince as a possible leader, paraded their loyalty as Louis traversed the district where they were in force. Roquelaure, lieutenant in Guienne, visited Tours with a thousand horse ; the militant Bishop of Poitiers, who had held that town against Condé, waited upon the King at the head of three hundred horsemen, and begged that he would repair to the scene of the late dispute.

The Queen resolved to accede to the Bishop's request, and Poitiers was made the next stage of the royal progress. Wherever the Court passed loyalty continued to revive ; the sovereign who had hitherto been no more than a name had suddenly assumed flesh and blood. He was the son of Henri-Quatre, and the very youth and helplessness of the fatherless boy may have made a successful appeal to the imagination of those of his subjects who had fallen under alien influences. "Toutes ces humeurs poitevines," recorded the "Mercure Français," "qui avaient tant été esmeues, se calmérent en les voyant." Vendôme began to foresee that submission in more than profession would ultimately be necessary, but contented himself with sending messages conveying the assurance of his affection, fidelity, and obedience. Louis was not to be propitiated by mere verbiage.

"What sort of obedience?" he asked contemptuously. "He has not yet disarmed."

Refusing to do the Duke the honour of receiving the letter his envoy had brought, he caused it to be handed to M. de Souvré, by whom it was read. From his rebel brother the King would personally accept no communication.

Nantes, being the capital of Vendôme's government, was a place of special importance. The provincial estates were also about to meet there, and it was decided that the Court should proceed thither. The journey was once more a triumphal progress, the Huguenots continuing foremost in their demonstrations of loyal devotion. The keys of their strongholds were presented to the King; it was suggested that he should visit La Rochelle. Rohan, Sully's son-in-law, and one of the chiefs of the reformed religion, came with his wife to Court. Even Sully was expected.

It was on July 11 that Nantes was reached. The journey had been made partly by water, and as Louis passed down the Loire, the country folk gathered on the banks of the river to greet and welcome, with tears of emotion and joyful acclamation, their little King. At Nantes the success of the expedition was to be crowned by the long-deferred submission of Vendôme. He must have been aware that he had no alternative. The young Governor of Brittany had not gone the way to make his position sure nor to win popularity in the province entrusted to him by his father. The country had been ravaged and laid waste by the troops in his pay, and when the Estates—opened by Louis in person—met, the light in which he was regarded was made clear. In the remonstrance they drew up the iniquities perpetrated during the last six months of his rule were laid bare, and it was entreated that the Duke should be deprived of his post.

To this length the Regent was not prepared to go. Vendôme, discredited as he was, was still the son of Henri-Quatre and safeguarded by his blood from the justice which might have been dealt out to a lesser offender. She was, nevertheless, determined that he should be reduced to obedience, and that order should be restored to the province. Vendôme was wise enough to perceive that further resistance would be vain; though it was not until the Court had spent a fortnight at Nantes that he came thither to tender his homage.

De Retz had preceded his comrade by some days. As, making obeisance to the King, he proffered his excuses for his tardy arrival, they were received by Louis in absolute silence; the General of the Galleys, present at the interview, hinting to the Duke that more was expected of him, and that pardon for his past conduct must be craved before he would be admitted favour. Retz having acted upon the suggestion, the King made reply, not ungraciously. When repentance, he said, should have been proved by deeds he would give him his affection.

Four days later arrived Retz's principal, Vendôme. The meeting between the brothers is graphically described in Héroard's journal.

Upon the Duke's entrance the King bowed coldly in greeting, as to any indifferent guest, leaving Vendôme to speak first, which he accordingly did.

"Sire," he began, "I could not fail to come and seek your Majesty, as soon as your first summons reached me, that I might give you the assurance that I have no other desire than to be your very humble and very obedient servant; desiring to testify it by the sacrifice of my life."

Louis's face was white with passion. It may be that the rancour of half-forgotten childish years, the old jealousy, supplemented and embittered the just indignation of the present moment.

"Serve me better in the future than you have done in the past," he said, his voice trembling, "and know that the greatest honour you have in the world is to be my brother."

"I believe it to be so," was the answer of Gabrielle's son. Yet he may have remembered, with not inexcusable bitterness, that there had been a time when it seemed possible that he should have occupied the place filled by Louis. However that might be, the game was for the present played out; and when the Court turned its face towards Paris he accompanied it.

There was no further reason to prolong its absence. The object of the expedition had been accomplished. The King's authority was established throughout the disturbed districts. Condé and his friends had been discredited and reduced to submission. The King might return to his capital a victor, and on September 17 he entered its gates.

The Queen had reached the city on the previous day, and Louis, as he rode in, dressed in white, was the central figure of the pageant. A brilliant reception had been prepared for him. The artillery had been brought from the Arsenal; the citizens had been placed under arms; members of the Parlement and other Orders joined in the welcome. All the city went forth to meet its King, returning to declare himself of an age to administer the government in person. In ten days he would enter upon his fourteenth year, the date fixed for the legal majority of the Kings of France.

The question that every one was asking was, what would be the attitude of the Prince de Condé? Would, or would he not, be present when the approaching ceremonial took place? One excuse after another had served him as a pretext for refusing obedience to the reiterated summons of the Regent. Would he still remain aloof, and would the function be accomplished in the absence of the first Prince of the Blood? No one could tell.

Paris was filling fast. Épernon had arrived; Longueville had followed; the Prince de Joinville was there, with many others. On September 29 the doubts concerning Condé were set at rest. That evening he reached Paris.

The long-deferred meeting between the King and his cousin took place informally. As Condé entered the city Louis chanced to be returning from the hunt, and the Prince, received into the royal carriage, accompanied him to the Louvre. There he was given a friendly reception by the Queen. The past was to be, if not forgotten, ignored. Condé remarked upon the King's height, Louis replying somewhat defiantly that he had grown in body but more in courage. And thus peace was, temporarily, made.

The ceremony of the King's public declaration of his majority had been fixed to take place on October 2. On September 27 the minority had come to an end. His little brother, not yet seven, watching the preparations for the event, wished to know when he too would be pronounced of age, and, hearing that this was only done in the case of kings, asked whether there were no other kingdoms save France. Being told that all were already provided with sovereigns, he made particular inquiries as to Turkey, with the intention of establishing his claim to that realm when he should be older. At a later date he would have liked to possess himself of a crown nearer home.

On October 1 Louis held his first Council as reigning monarch. To the morrow he seems to have looked forward with some nervous trepidation; and, when put to bed in the evening, he made a vow to Notre Dame des Vertus, on condition that he should be able to pronounce the words he was to utter on his majority without mistake.

On the following day the ceremony putting a formal end to his childhood took place. Arrayed in gold tissue and covered with diamonds—including the magnificent collar his mother had had made for his future bride—he set forth from the Louvre, surrounded by the great nobles and officers of State; and before the assembled Parlement presented himself as ready to take the government into his own hands. The speech which had caused him anxiety on the previous night was uttered firmly, loudly, and without hesitation.

"Messieurs," he said, "having attained my majority, I have come hither to let you know that, being of age, I intend to govern my kingdom by means of good counsel, with piety and justice. From all my subjects I expect the respect and obedience due to the sovereign power and the royal authority placed by God in my hands. They may likewise anticipate from me the protection and favour to be looked for from a good King, who desires above all things their peace and welfare. You will hear my intentions more fully from the Chancellor."

Turning to the Queen, he made her his acknowledgments.

" Madame, I thank you for the trouble you have taken for me. I beg you will continue to do so, and to govern and command as hitherto. It is my will and intention that you should be obeyed in all things and in all places, and that, after myself, and in my absence, you should be head of my Council."

Certain formalities followed — a speech from the Chancellor, one from the Queen ; the registering of decrees directed against duelling and blasphemy. The edict of Henri-Quatre in favour of the Protestants was renewed ; and, with the endorsement of what had passed by the voice of the assembly and the thanks of the Queen for the position conferred upon her, the proceedings were brought to a close.

It had been a bad day's work. The government of Marie de Medicis was to continue, established upon its new footing, to her own ruin, as well as to the detriment of the kingdom. Whatever might be the wishes of those in power, Louis would not always remain a child.

The momentous transaction concluded, he returned to the palace, very gay, but no doubt tired out by the function, which had lasted no less than four hours. Put to bed, he had his toys brought to him there, amusing himself by painting upon little wooden boxes, until, the long day over, he fell asleep to the sound of music.

And thus the personal government of Louis XIII. was inaugurated.

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