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THE STORY OF DU BARRY

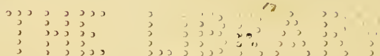
MRS. LESLIE CARTER.

THE STORY *of* DU BARRY

BY

JAMES L. FORD

With Six Full-Page Illustrations in Photogravure and Fifty-Five Half-Tone Engravings



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THE STORY OF DU BARRY

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY SETS THE STAGE

"I NEVER go on the stage as Du Barry without seeing that awful guillotine knife shining before me in every scene that I play," said Mrs. Leslie Carter one night just after the curtain had fallen on the last act of Belasco's drama; and we who view the play from before the footlights, seeing every scene from the enlightened standpoint of latter-day knowledge, are perhaps inclined to wonder whether any vision of

the guillotine ever troubled the dreams of Louis XV, Jeanette Du Barry and the rest of the dissolute court that went dancing and singing down the road that at last became the "deluge" that Pompadour had foreseen as the aftermath of it all.

It seems inevitable, as we look back at it now, — this period of blood and vengeance that was the outcome of so many decades of luxury in high places and bitter poverty in the homes of the lowly; yet we of the present day can no more read the future than could the nobles of a century and a half ago who danced and drank and wore fine clothes and cared little for the welfare of France so long as they basked in the favor of their king.

They had had many warnings before the storm broke in its awful fury. In 1757, Damiens, the shabby man with the penknife who was tortured to death for his futile attempt on the life of the king, had written from his prison cell these ominous words:

"Sire, I am sorry that I was so unfortunate as to gain access to you; but if you

do not take your people's part, before many years you and the dauphin and many others will perish."

Earlier than that the philosophers had sounded the note of protest and warning, generally by means of pamphlets and books hurled into France from some rock of exile to which they had been banished. Voltaire had foreseen what destiny had in store for his mal-governed country as clearly as had Madame de Pompadour, whose remark "after us the deluge" became the by-word of her royal lover's court.

Sardou has said that when History makes a drama, the work is well done, and he speaks with a modesty that well becomes one of the first of modern French dramatists. He might have added that History seldom does more than furnish the raw dramatic material which the playwright must knead into dramatic form, even as the sculptor kneads the rough clay into the statue which he imbues with his own genius.

In the case of Madame Du Barry, the last of that long line of "queens of the left

hand" whose influence was so potent in French statecraft during the eighteenth century, History has certainly set the stage for her in gorgeous fashion, and made ready for her first entrance by years of Bourbon rule which brought about the social and political conditions under which she played her picturesque and interesting part.

The age in which she lived was worse than the present one, in that a certain number of men and women, forming the so-called "privileged classes," had free license to do a great many things that their counterparts of to-day would like to do, were it not for the force of public opinion. It was an age of wanton luxury and indulgence for the few, and one of great suffering and misfortune for the many. Happily enough for the purposes of the drama, the world was beginning to tire of these conditions, and was preparing for a great upheaval at about the time that Madame Du Barry set her foot upon the threshold of her destiny.

The fires of liberty were ready for kindling across the ocean, where George Wash-

ington of Virginia had already won his spurs in the French and Indian war; and statesmen like John Hancock and Samuel Adams in Massachusetts were beginning to realize that there could be no loyalty and contentment in the colonies so long as George III continued to regard his American subjects as people made only to be taxed for his benefit. But this king who, like his royal brother in France, believed that he ruled by divine right, paid no more heed to the remonstrances of those statesmen of the colonies whose words should have had weight, than Braddock, the General Redvers-Buller of his day and generation, did to the warnings of his young staff officer, Washington, who had had his experience in Indian fighting and was familiar with the red men's tricks.

Braddock's conceit and ignorance led him to underestimate the strength of his enemy, while he placed an absurdly high value on his own prowess and the advantage to be derived from fighting the red men "according to the rules of war," so it happens that the story of his defeat and

death sounds very much like a chapter — almost any chapter — from the history of the Boer war. His disposition seems to have been not unlike that of King George, who certainly did not lose his American colonies because of his gracious and tactful methods of dealing with them.

And while the people of these colonies were preparing for the struggle from which they were to emerge a powerful young nation, one whose future possibilities even the wisest among us cannot yet predict, the French people, who had been ground down by years of Bourbon misrule, were being driven by the inexorable force of circumstances into a revolution of a totally different kind, and one that was second only to our own in its effect on the generations that were to come after it.

There is nothing in our civilization of to-day which more closely resembles what is poetically termed the "*ancien régime*" in France, than the stockyards in Chicago, with their owners as the Bourbon king, and the sheep, cattle, and pigs as the people. This, however, is not quite a fair compar-

"Fascinating Idlers and Handsome Noblemen."

ison, as the cattle are supplied with food, drink, and shelter, and are killed instantly, and not permitted to drag themselves off to remote parts of the field and there die of hunger, disease, or their wounds. They are of no use, however, except to be killed, and in this respect they bear a distinct resemblance to the subjects of Louis, known in the early years of his reign as "the well-beloved," and of his predecessor, "the grand monarch," by whom the common herd were looked upon as good for nothing except to pay taxes and stop bullets.

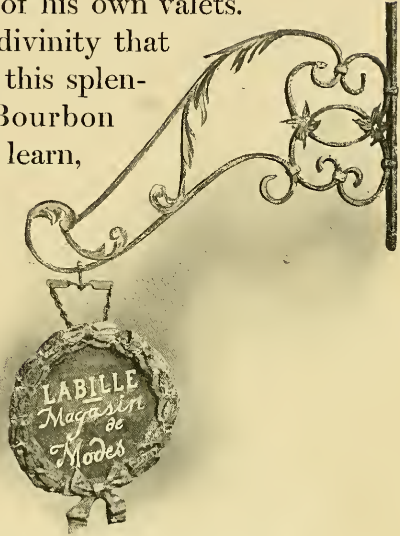
Once in a while there are signs of revolt and dissatisfaction in the Chicago stock-yard, and in like manner, even before the Du Barry's accession to power, there had been signs of dissatisfaction among the human cattle of her august lover. But these little rebellions, put down — and often by hired mercenaries — as quickly as they were begun, were nothing more than the mere angry tossing of a few pairs of horns, or a squeal of defiance from some far-seeing pig, drawing back from the

shambles in a vain effort to escape his predestined fate.

For the human cattle who made up the bulk of the population of France, far less consideration was shown than for their hoofed and horned counterparts in Chicago, for it was the fortune of the first-named to be ruled absolutely by a selfish, pleasure-loving monarch who believed that he governed by divine right, and that those who lived under his dominion could have no higher duty to perform than that of servile obedience to his will. He it was who could consign men with whom, perhaps, he had supped and walked and talked the day before, to a living death in the Bastille, merely to satisfy his own anger or the jealous whim of a mistress. He it was who stood watching the funeral procession of his dead love, Madame de Pompadour, as it started from the courtyard in Versailles for Paris, and remarked, as he drummed with idle fingers on the window-pane, " Madame la Marquise will have a wet day for her ride." He it was who, in the early years of his reign, gained the surname of "well-beloved," and who,

at the end, was hustled into the ground with less ceremony and respect than would have been shown to one of his own valets.

Yet such was the divinity that did hedge this king, this splendid type of the Bourbon who could neither learn, nor forgive, nor forget, that the greatest ladies in his court vied with one another for the honor of filling the position left vacant by the death of Madame de Pompadour.



Reproduction of the original sign of the milliner's shop.

But Louis XV would have none of them. "I will never choose another mistress from the ranks of the nobility," he said. "It's too much trouble to get rid of them when they pall upon me."

Lord Chesterfield once said of him: "By an unusual combination, Louis XV was both

hated and despised," and to the day of his death he never realized the awful and bloody depth of the abyss that lay directly beneath his feet and those of the wigged and perfumed courtiers who helped him in his lifelong race after pleasure, with ennui following close upon his heels. To the very end he lived only for himself, regarding the remonstrances of his cabinet and the opposition of his parliament as merely the outward and visible signs of a revolutionary spirit which must be crushed at all hazards. He went to his death still firmly believing that he had ruled by divine right, and little dreaming that the Almighty, on whom he had sought to throw the responsibility for so much evil, was even then forging a thunderbolt that was destined to involve Europe in a storm of unexampled violence, — one that would in the end clear the political skies and leave the atmosphere freer and purer than ever before.

Within three months after the formal presentation of Madame Du Barry at the court of her king and lover, Napoleon Bonaparte was born in the Island of Cor-

sica. He took the field at a surprisingly early age, but that was because he was sorely needed, and the world had waited for him till its patience had long since been exhausted.

Such, in brief, were the conditions under which History prepared the French stage for Jeanette Du Barry's life-drama; but although she furnished a gorgeous setting, and associated her with various men and women of great historic and dramatic value, the work of building a play was left, as it always is in such cases, to be done by the dramatist.

For example, in Julius Cæsar, the greatest of all historical dramas, History has supplied the raw material in the shape of the life of Cæsar, his murder, the events that led up to it, and its immediate results. From this splendid material Shakespeare constructed a drama which has done more than all else that has been written about Julius Cæsar to impress upon the world the tragic story of his fall. In doing this, he did not content himself with arranging a number of scenes from the life of the great

Roman emperor in order that his drama might be historically accurate in trivial as well as in important details. Had he done this, no matter if he had clothed his work in language as beautiful and convincing as that which still lives in his deathless drama, his work would not have survived a dozen representations, — in fact, it would not have been a play at all.

But Shakespeare was a genius and not a mere cataloguer of events, and when it came to dealing with such a tremendous theme as that of the Roman conspiracy and the tragedy which it brought about, he set his imagination to work, and the touch of his genius transformed the dull clay of history into a living, breathing story that has touched the hearts of generations of playgoers and will continue to charm and interest and instruct so long as the English language shall be spoken. He invented the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius. He invented the great speech of Brutus to the Roman people. He invented that masterpiece of subtle, convincing oratory in which the brilliant Marc Antony

With her Shopmates at Labille's.

stirs the very stones of Rome to rise and mutiny. In short, the world is indebted to the illuminating genius of the playwright, and not to a mere recorder of history, for nearly every one of the great scenes and speeches which have kept alive in the hearts of generation after generation of humanity the impressive story of Cæsar's fall.

It is a far cry from Shakespeare to Rostand, in time and in other respects as well, but apart from the interest that attaches itself to every chapter and paragraph of the Napoleonic story, what dramatic value do we find in the life of that " dove that found birth within an eagle's nest," the Duc de Reichstadt? None whatever, excepting that which the dramatist has invented. Even the character which Madame Bernhardt portrayed with so much art is one in which Metternich, could he return to earth, would probably fail to recognize the unfortunate young prince whose unhappy destiny he helped to shape. But Rostand is perfectly justified in what he has done.

Given the son of the world's conqueror,

baptized at Notre Dame amid the acclamations of all Paris, anointed in the cradle with the oil by the virtue of which he was to rule by divine right, and accustomed from his very earliest childhood to the ceremonial deference due him not only as a king, but also as the only son of one who was almost a demigod in the eyes of his people, it was only fair to assume that the fires of ambition burned fiercely within his breast, although, as a matter of fact, they did not. And it is on this perfectly justifiable assumption that the play of "L'Aiglon" is constructed. The real Napoleon's son, whom we find in the pages of veracious, unimaginative history, could not have been made to serve as the central figure of a drama, because he did not possess the requisite attributes.

CHAPTER II

A LOWLY BEGINNING

HE life of Madame Du Barry, while not affording in itself as much in the way of raw dramatic material as does that of Julius Cæsar, has nevertheless been fashioned into a stage story of deep human interest, set in brilliant surroundings, and far better suited to the tastes of modern audiences than that of the poor little king of Rome. It is, moreover, a story which, while following the true course of history more closely than almost any successful historical play of modern times, is nevertheless sufficiently charged with the dramatist's imagination to seem in the eyes of twentieth century

audiences an intensely interesting picture of what might very well have happened at the court of the French king.

Historians differ widely as to the real character of this last of the Favorites, a circumstance not to be wondered at when we study the conditions under which she lived, and take into account the extreme of adulation on the one hand and execration on the other that were the natural results of the king's fondness for her. These historians differ also as to her parentage, the date of her birth, the exact extent of her power, and in scores of other respects.

It is certain, however, that she was born in Vaucouleurs, the same little French village in which Joan of Arc first saw the light nearly three hundred and fifty years before. Indeed, Anne Bécu, the mother of Du Barry, always claimed a blood-relationship with the Maid of Orleans, a boast which it would probably have been difficult for her to substantiate. Certain it is that in the middle of the eighteenth century the Bécu family was not one of great distinction, most of its members being

engaged in domestic service, while the certificate of Madame Du Barry's birth, taken from the parish records in the town of Vaucouleurs, describes her as "Jeanette, natural daughter of Anne Bécu, sometimes called Quantigny, born on the 19th of August, in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-three, and baptized the same day."

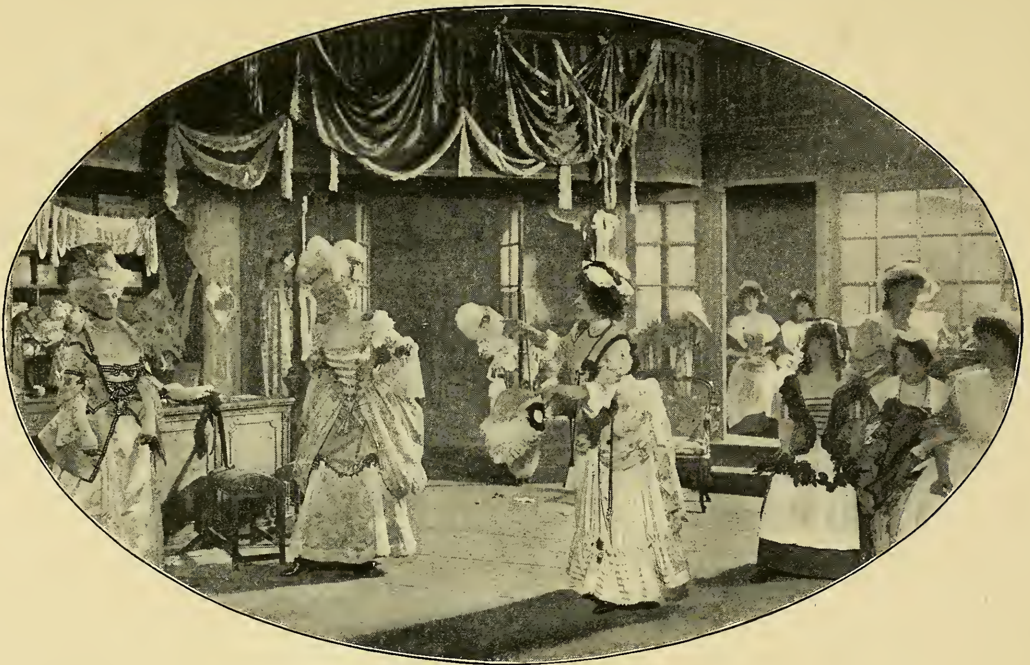
Milliner's Doll.

Who little Jeanette's father was will never be known. Tradition and history assert variously that he was a tax-collector, a sailor, and an unfrocked monk named Gomard de Vaubernier. From these possible parents, Mr. Belasco selected the last named as being more interesting than either of the others, and he actually introduces him for a moment in the first act of the drama in the guise of a shoe-cleaner, fitted out with his elaborate contrivance for cleaning shoes and imparting to them the dead lustreless finish that was in vogue in Louis XV's time.

In her own memoirs,[1] Madame Du Barry gives her birth as the 28th of August, 1746, and passes over the maternal claim to kinship with the inspired maid as if she put no faith in it. She speaks of her father as a man without fortune who had accepted a mean situation as clerk at the Barrieres, and who had married her mother from love. The reason for this will be shown in another chapter.

But, whether married or no, Jeanette's mother found herself, a few years after the birth of her daughter, absolutely without resources, and set out for Paris with the intention of trying her luck there. Through the kindness of a financier named Dumonceau, Jeanette was sent to the Convent of

[1] The four volumes purporting to be the memoirs of the Countess Du Barry have been drawn on guardedly for some of the material of lesser importance contained in this book. In all probability these memoirs are largely apocryphal, but they have been compiled, if not entirely by Madame Du Barry herself, at least by some one who was thoroughly familiar with the history of her time, as well as with her own career, and who, for reasons of his own, did not wish to place his own name on the title-page. Other examples can be named of books which contain a vast amount of accurate and interesting information of a personal and delicate nature, and which are nevertheless apocryphal as to signature.



Something New in Bonnets.

Sainte-Aure. This convent was designed as a retreat for young girls whose condition in life was such as to expose them to temptation, and here Jeanette remained until she was nearly fifteen. During all these years she lived a life of such extreme rigor that her subsequent relapse from austere virtue is not to be wondered at. It was an existence of terrible severity for children as young as she. Clothed in an ugly dress, deprived of all the little ornaments that children hold dear, forbidden to laugh, jest or play with her little companions, and obliged to devote most of her time to work, nothing but her elasticity of spirit and marvellous birthright of roguish, infectious gayety enabled her to remain in the dreary Convent of Sainte-Aure as long as she did.

Soon after leaving the convent, her mother lost her situation, and the young girl began to earn her living by going from door to door in Paris and the near-by country with a little open box of watch-guards, imitation pearls, brilliants, and snuff-boxes which she offered for sale. Through the

influence of a certain Madame Lagarde, the girl was removed from the temptations of the street and retained by her as a sort of lady's companion in her Château Cour-Neuve. The old lady was charmed with the growing beauty and bright, amusing chatter of her new retainer, and, for a time, all went well.

It was at Madame Lagarde's that she gained that familiarity with certain of the outward and visible signs of high breeding which stood her in such good stead when in after years she was first admitted to the intimate circle of courtiers that clustered about the French king. Among those who frequented the house were Voltaire, at that time the most powerful, most quoted, most feared, and most sought-after man in the kingdom; M. Marmontel, the author of the famous "Moral Tales," and M. Grimm, whom she describes as "a cunning fox, witty, though a German, very ugly and very thin." Besides these men of literary renown, Madame Lagarde's salon was frequented by such aristocrats as the Duc de Richelieu, the Prince de Soubise,

and the Duc de Brissac, whose son was destined to play a part of no mean importance in the story of her later years. Unfortunately, however, Madame Lagarde had a young son living with her, and it was not long before she discovered and nipped in the bud a love affair between the two young people which had made a most promising beginning. Jeanette, cast once more upon her own resources, entered, under the name of Lançon — that of the new husband whom her mother had just taken — the millinery establishment of Monsieur Labille in the rue Saint-Honoré.

Here, although safe from the brutal temptations of the street, she was exposed to others that were far more dangerous.

"Imagine," says that conscientious and entertaining chronicler, M. de Goncour, "stores with glass windows all around, where fascinating idlers and handsome noblemen kept ogling the girls from morning till night; shutters which were used for correspondence and which allowed the notes, folded up fan-fashion, to be passed through the peg holes; little trips out of

doors where the smart milliner's girl, such as Leclerc has sketched her in the series of costumes of D'Esnoult and Repilly, trotted about with a conquering air, her head covered with a big black hat shaped like a calash, allowing her fair curls to slip down her rounded shapely waist, squeezed into a polonaise of printed calico, trimmed with muslin. Imagine, at the end of all this, conversations and proposals and, after the proposals and the responses to the proposals, it was for nearly every one of them, as it was for the little Lançon girl, some Monsieur Lavauvelarbiere (one of Jeanette's early lovers) or some Monsieur Duval or somebody else."

This picture we may supplement with one given in Madame Du Barry's own words :

"I now commenced a new existence, and how different a one from that I had led at Sainte-Aure! There, all was wearisome and dull; there, the least motion, a word, a burst of laughter, was kept in check, and sometimes we were severely punished. At Madame Labille's there was a constant watch to keep the house in order and regularity; but

how different from the unceasing surveillance of the convent! Here we were almost mistresses of our own actions, provided the allotted portions of our work were properly done. We might talk of anything that came into our heads; we were at liberty to laugh at anything that provoked our mirth, and we might sing as much as we pleased. And we did chatter, laugh and sing to an unlimited extent. Out of the shop on Sunday, we were at perfect liberty and at equal liberty in our chambers, which were situated at the top of the house. Each of us had her room, which was small but very neat. My godfather had mine decorated with a handsome carpet, and gave me a commode, a pier-glass, a small table, four chairs, and an armchair of velvet, magnificently gilt. This was all luxury, and when my fellow-apprentices came to see my apartment, the richness of the furniture excited surprise and universal admiration. For at least four and twenty hours the sole theme of conversation at Madame Labille's was the chamber of Mademoiselle Lançon."

It is not easy for us of the present age to imagine such an establishment as that in which little Jeanette found employment. Patronized by women of the very highest social position, it was at the same time constantly frequented by the most notorious of female harpies, while it kept in stock sword-

knots, shoe-buckles, and other articles of male adornment, the sale of which furthered those free and easy flirtations between the apprentices and the idle men of the town which were carried on across the counters without even the pretence of concealment. Moreover, we must bear in mind the fact that in the France of the eighteenth century millinery and dressmaking were industries of the highest importance in the economic life of the nation, and the creations of such a shop as that of Labille were viewed by everybody and discussed seriously like works of art.

At that time French taste governed the entire world in matters of dress and adornment, as for that matter it did a century later during the Second Empire. The new fashions for each season emanated from the court of the king, and were sent abroad by means of a manikin called "the great doll of France," which was dressed in accordance with the very latest styles, and sent to every court of Europe in charge of an envoy and a numerous suite of attachés and lackeys. So much importance did

Jeanette and Cossé-Brissac.

foreigners of fashion and distinction attach to the visits of this doll, the forerunner of the modern fashion-plate, which was of course unknown then, that once, during the Seven Years' War, when the British had established such a complete blockade of the French ports that it was impossible for a single ship to break through the cordon, an exception was made in favor of the vessel bearing the great doll of France, which was allowed to cross the channel.

And it is with no small degree of pride that French historians describe the manner in which the flags of the enemy's fleet were dipped in salutation to the ship bearing the doll and its accompanying embassy on its way to teach the English how to dress themselves properly.

It was toward the close of a reign characterized by luxury in personal adornment, wanton licentiousness, and selfish indifference to the needs of others, — a rococo age of elaborate ceremonial, superficial ornament, and over-gilding, — and in a shop that might very well have contributed to the outfit of the great doll of France, that Jeanette

Vaubernier first made her bow. She was then at the very dawn of womanhood, and equipped with gifts of personal beauty and coquetry which made her, from the very first, the object of gallant attentions on the part of the young men of fashion who fluttered about the rue Saint-Honoré, and awakened the immediate interest of the buzzards of both sexes, who were more in evidence then in Paris than ever before or since, and forever on the lookout for some attractive bit of femininity which could be added to the stock and trade of their hideous traffic.

The peculiar clientele of the Labille shop must be borne in mind if we are to judge this young milliner's girl fairly, and we must also take into consideration her daily surroundings and the mode of life of her companions and shopmates. And these young women, had they been taken to task by any of the professional reformers of their day, would undoubtedly have justified their conduct on the ground that they were merely following the example set by the very highest women of the no-

bility, and winked at by the princes of the church.

Nor can we in fairness regard the excuse as a lame one, for at that time the post of Favorite at the king's court was one that was openly coveted, and shamelessly sought by women who bore the proudest names in the kingdom.

Hurdy-gurdy player.

As for the men with whom Jeanette was now brought in contact, they were worthy members of a society of such exalted ideas that it could conceive of no finer or more to be desired post than that of Favorite to a king who had long since grown weary of all womankind and was as difficult to please as a man might well be who had followed pleasure through youth, manhood, and up to the beginnings of old age and to the very point of satiety.

No man or woman would have been deemed worthy of a place in the corrupt court of this blasé monarch who did not stand ready at a moment's notice to sacrifice to his pleasure a wife, sister or daughter, as his taste might dictate. It was this spirit of loyalty to the person of their sovereign that had much to do with the development of the race of "*grands seigneurs*," — courtly gentlemen bearing splendid historic names, wearing exquisitely ruffled clothes, and carrying at their sides slender, jewel-hilted swords which they were always ready to draw in defence of their king, or of what they were pleased to term their honor. These were the men who deemed it an honor to sacrifice a wife or sister to the king's whim, and it is pleasant to learn from the pages of history that His Majesty was always willing to pay handsomely for such proofs of loyalty on the part of husband or brother.

There were, however, in the ranks of the nobility, men who could be singled out as notable exceptions to the rule of dishonor and licentiousness that prevailed at the

The Beginning of a Great Love.

court of King Louis, and one of these was that distinguished and gallant gentleman, the Duc de Cossé-Brissac, Governor of Paris and Colonel of the Cent Gardes du Roi, whose after life was so curiously bound up with that of the humble little milliner's girl, Jeanette Lançon.

It was this nobleman whom the king bade to take courage, and not grieve over so small a disaster as a scandal that affected the fair name of one of his female relatives. And to this he made answer:

"Sire, I trust that I have courage to bear resignedly any disaster, though none to support dishonor."

All historians unite in singling out this nobleman from the others of his day as a man worthy of the highest praise for the lofty purity of his character.

"His romantic devotion to Jeanette Du Barry," says one of these chroniclers, "is indeed singular. For many years, until he fell a victim to the Revolution, he paid her a sort of passionate worship; such as, in the old romances of chivalry, gallant knights were supposed to render to the

ladies to whom they had sworn fealty. Before his death he made a will providing handsomely for her, and recommending her to the care of his nearest of kin as one 'who has been very dear' to him."

But it was not every young milliner's girl who had the good fortune to win the chivalrous devotion of such a man as the Duc de Cossé-Brissac. They were men of a very different sort who came crowding into Labille's shop, ostensibly to look at sword-knots or the latest design in shoe-buckles, but in reality to flirt with the young girls, to invite them to theatre and supper parties, and to arrange with them for meetings on Sundays and holidays. The esteem in which they held these young apprentices may easily be imagined. And if they could traffic openly in the honor of wife or sister without loss of caste, who can blame these girls for regarding their attentions as a distinction to be proud of?

The modern biped whose mission in life is to follow and insult young women who work for a living is a despicable creature,

but he is a high-minded gentleman in comparison with some of the "grand seigneurs" who used to haunt the milliner's shop of Madame Labille, and we cannot fairly estimate her character without taking theirs into account as well.

CHAPTER III

ENTERING UPON HER CAREER

ADAME LABILLE was the real owner of the shop which was conducted, for form's sake, in her husband's name. It was situated in the rue St. Honoré at the corner of the rue Neuf-des-Petits-Champs, since made world-famous in Thackeray's "Ballad of Bouillabaisse." It is in this shop that the dramatist first reveals his heroine as a light-hearted, roguish girl, ready to flirt with any one who comes along, no matter whether he be soldier or prelate, perfectly willing to borrow for her own use the new hat which has just been made for a princess, and obviously a girl who is on the best of terms with herself

The Belle of Labille's Shop.

and every one about her. The same qualities of character and disposition which made her popular with her shopmates, which won the love of her employer and held it, too, to the very day of her execution, are the qualities which enchained the fancy of Louis XV the first time that he saw her, and enabled her to hold her place as Favorite until the end of his reign.

In the play the shop in which Jeanette Vaubernier actually worked is reproduced as nearly as possible, and the back of the scene is so constructed that, reversed, it is used to reveal the exterior in the final act of the drama. In all respects this scene is a perfect study of a milliner's shop of that period. The *affiche*, or sign, which hangs on the wall, is an exact copy of the one which was actually displayed in Labille's shop. And if we read it with the aid of opera-glasses, we learn precisely what sort of goods were sold there. These very goods are displayed in the mimic scene, and are of great variety, for the milliner of Louis XV's time not only made hats and bonnets, but also kept a large stock of

silks, muslins, and other dress fabrics, together with buckles, high-heeled slippers, sword-knots, and other articles of wear and adornment.

The benches scattered about the room for the convenience of the customers are copied from those in use at that time, and the bandboxes are specially designed for hats that were larger and much more elaborate than those that are worn at the present day. The sedan chair that stops for a single moment before the door is well worth the attention of the serious student of the Louis XV period. It is an exact copy of the one used by the Polish princess who became the wife of Louis and the Queen of France, and it opens in such a way as to admit the elaborately large headdresses which were in fashion during her time.

It was during her apprenticeship in this shop that Madame Du Barry, according to her own confession, had her first love affair. Her sweetheart was a young pastry-cook named Nicolas Mothon, and his lowly station in life excited the contempt of the

other young women in the shop, whose adorers were either notaries or barrister's clerks, students or soldiers.

That her attachment for her humble lover was genuine cannot be doubted, for years afterward when, at the close of her remarkable career she had retired to private life, this woman who had basked in the supreme favor of her king wrote as follows: "When I call to remembrance all those who have adored me, shall I say that it is not poor Nicolas, perhaps, who pleased me least! I, too, have known what first love is."

In the drama there is no Nicolas the pastry-cook. Wisely enough, Mr. Belasco has disregarded whatever claims to priority he may have possessed, and plunged at once into the one true, enduring, and creditable love affair that runs through the life of his heroine.

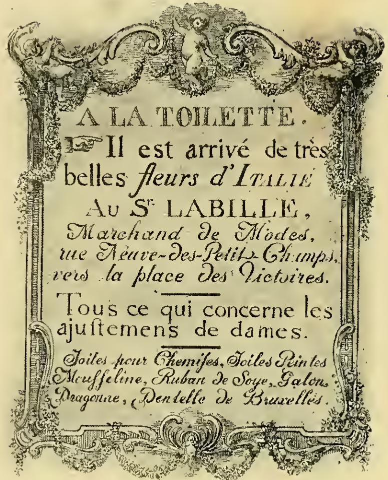
Young Cossé-Brissac appears in the very first act, an ideal French lover, ardent, chivalrous and handsome. As a matter of fact, although history does not speak definitely on the subject, the young noble did

not make known his love for her until some years later; but, in deference to dramatic exigencies, this affair of the heart is made to date from the very beginning of the drama. He comes to see her in the shop, and she flirts with him across the counter, while pretending to wait on one of the customers. He brings her flowers, too, — a bunch of violets, — and their fragrance permeates the whole play. In assuming that this love affair was a pure and honorable one throughout, Mr. Belasco does not violate historical truth, — though he would be perfectly justified in so doing, — but simply avails himself of the fact that history tells us nothing positively to the contrary.

Moreover, he has made this love affair, with its consequent hates and jealousies, the chief motive of his drama, quite properly giving it precedence over her more mercenary relations with the king.

After the affair with the pastry-cook came one with a hair-dresser named Lamat, which lasted no longer than that unfortunate gentleman's very short purse. This

young man, however, may be said to have left his mark on history by virtue of a certain style of hair-dressing which he designed expressly for his young sweetheart, and which is still known — when known at all — by her name. After Lamat had impoverished himself through the extravagance of his young mistress he fled to England to escape his debts while she entered a gambling house kept by a certain Madame Duquesnoy in the rue de Bourbon. In those days the fashionable Parisian gambling houses were much frequented by women, and were generally looked upon as convenient places of rendezvous for the light-minded and dissolute.



Copy of affiche actually used in the shop of Labille.

Madame Duquesnoy's gambling house serves as the setting for the second act of the play, and a very notable scene it is too,

done entirely in a peculiar shade of red. It is a shade that cannot be found elsewhere in this country, for it is made expressly for this scene in France, and the silk brocade which is employed for walls, curtains and furniture is dyed with it. It is the only shade of red that could be used as a background for a woman with such extraordinary red hair as that of Mrs. Carter.

It was while frequenting this gaming house that Jeanette Vaubernier (or Lançon, as she called herself now) first met, in the person of the Count Jean Du Barry, a man who was destined to play a most important part in the shaping of her strange destiny, and whom Horace Walpole, in his memoirs of that period, aptly characterized as "a most consummate blackguard." The count came from the neighborhood of Toulouse, and always claimed connection with the Barry family who have resided for years in the south of Ireland, as well as with their kinfolk the Barrymores. He had come up to Paris from Toulouse, leaving behind him a wife who in after

A Noble Scoundrel.

years contemptuously refused to accept any benefit whatever from the hands of either her husband or the Favorite. In Paris the count succeeded in obtaining a government contract for supplying provisions to the Island of Corsica, and with the money which this yielded him he indulged his tastes for gambling and other debaucheries to a degree which soon gained for him the name of *Roué*.

As time went on and his acquaintance among men of wealth and fashion increased, the count found other ways of earning money beside his Corsican contract. One source of revenue was the gambling table, where at this time fortune always smiled upon him, and another was the traffic in young and pretty women, in which, like many another nobleman and *grande dame* of that corrupt age, he took part without any evidence of shame. This man is known to have carried on his infamous trade as far back as the time of Madame de Pompadour, whom he had sought to supplant with a certain Mademoiselle Dorothée, the daughter of a Strasburg water-carrier. That there

was "money in the business" may be inferred from the fact that the Count Du Barry had the effrontery to ask for himself the post of Minister to Cologne on the ground that it was he who had introduced her to the king, and that, too, without waiting to learn if she had found favor in the royal eyes.

Under the protection of this gallant gentleman Jeanette was extremely happy for she was allowed to plunge heart and soul into the gayest life that the French capital had to offer. It was in the very midst of all this gayety that something happened which she records at considerable length, and which is presented, in a somewhat altered form, in the drama. One day while walking in the street she was followed by a young man of distinguished appearance, richly clad, and with something peculiarly sombre and mysterious in his face which excited her curiosity. This young man dogged her footsteps for two or three days, until at last she turned upon him and asked him what he meant by following her.

"Mademoiselle," he said in most respect-

ful accents, "promise to grant me the first reasonable favor I shall ask of you when you come to be Queen of France."

Smilingly she gave the required promise, and then the unknown continued: "You think me mad, I know; but I pray you have a better opinion of me. Adieu, mademoiselle. There will be nothing more extraordinary after your elevation than your end."

Returning home she related the incident to Count Jean, who was profoundly impressed.

"It is strange," he said, "but that prophecy fits in with what has already come into my own head. Why should you not be queen, — not the real queen, of course, but as Madame de Pompadour was?"

From this moment the scheme suggested by the words of the mysterious stranger took complete possession of Count Du Barry's breast, and for weeks he thought of it night and day, and planned a hundred projects for its accomplishment.

In the drama this incident receives due attention, although for pictorial purposes

the prophecy is not made by the young man in the street but by a picturesque old witch who comes into the gaming house to tell fortunes. In this act, too, we see the change that has taken place in the character of the young girl whose roguish follies were but yesterday the delight of her companions in the millinery shop, and a constant source of attraction to the young men of fashion who came flocking about there. She is a woman now, and has set her feet, lightly it is true, but none the less surely, in the path that she is to follow to the end, and which leads direct to the palace of Versailles.

Under the tutelage of the unprincipled Du Barry she has entered upon a life of dissipation and excitement which is already beginning to tell on her, and from which she recoils now and then at the thought of Cossé-Brissac.

Compressed into this scene are two of the crucial events of her mimic life. One, historical, her meeting with the king, and the other, invented, her quarrel with her lover which definitely determines her future course of life.

Concerning this gambling house period of her career Madame Du Barry herself says: "My entrance into the world was bad; the progress of it was like the commencement, and I led a dissipated life."

It is during one of the moments of reflection that come now and then to such as she — no matter how fast the pace or how deep the cup — that she goes back in fancy and with infinite yearning to the days when she wandered through country lanes and hedge-rows, selling her little trinkets to whomever would buy. The sky was blue then, the grass green, and the violets, which she loved, and which Cossé gave her, were lifting their shy heads in the quiet places in the woods.

The stranger's prophecy made a profound impression on Jean Du Barry. And, indeed, the prospect of supplying an incumbent for the place that had been vacant since the death of Madame de Pompadour was in itself enough to completely enlist the sympathy and interest of a man of his nature.

For to be the Favorite of the King of

France meant not merely a life of indolent pleasure, but power far exceeding that of any queen or minister. The post carried with it the appointment of cabinets, the dismissal of statesmen and generals, the disposal of the highest honors within the gift of the sovereign, and unlimited drafts on the public treasury. It is not easy for people of the present day, who have grown up under such institutions as ours, to understand how the French nation could submit year after year to such government as this.

But if the sufferings of the people were great, so was their vengeance, and the Reign of Terror was simply a natural and inevitable outcome of it all, — the mad bloodthirstiness of a wild beast which, hunted and tormented beyond all endurance, turns upon its pursuers and rends them. The blood of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette was shed in atonement for the crimes of the two reigns that preceded theirs.

Since the days of the elegant Pompadour there had been no Favorite in the royal palaces, though it would have been hard to

Grands Seigneurs.

find among all the high-born dames of France a single one with any pretensions whatever to youth and beauty who did not aspire to the post. Many there were, indeed, whose claims were artfully pressed by near relatives or mercenary intermediaries; but the king, who was by this time nearly threescore years of age, and had run the whole gamut of pleasure and dissipation, would have none of them. By nature morose and "unamusable," as Talleyrand said of the first Napoleon, as years went by he grew more and more difficult to entertain. Madame de Pompadour had been a woman of wit, beauty, and talent. A consummate actress behind as well as before the footlights, she had not only made her way skilfully among the grand ladies of the court, but had also organized the theatre of the *Petits Cabinets*, in which she was wont to entertain the king, taking the leading part herself and choosing her supporting company from among the ranks of the higher nobility.

These performances were usually given to an audience of not more than twoscore,

and so great was the fame that attached itself to them, that ambassadors and cabinet ministers considered it an honor to be invited to take even the smallest part in the representation.

Madame de Pompadour, moreover, was a woman of genuine artistic temperament, and one thoroughly in touch with the spirit of her luxurious, richly decorative age. With her own hands she engraved numerous portraits of her royal lover and did much to develop the manufacture of Sêvres porcelain, which was begun during her reign.

Jeanette Vaubernier, on the other hand, was merely an unlettered Parisian grisette who had been transplanted from behind the counter of the milliner shop, where she had bloomed like a fragrant, healthy carnation, to the hot-house atmosphere of a gambling house, where, among the painted and wrinkled and world-worn habitués, she seemed like an exotic of rare beauty and exquisitely fresh charm. In the ways of court life she had had absolutely no experience, and she herself laughed

in unaffected merriment at the mere idea of filling the place of the gifted and beautiful Pompadour.

Nevertheless the day came when Count Du Barry entered her apartment radiant with delight, and informed her that their dinner-table that night was to be graced by no less a person than that widely known and infamous creature of Louis XV called Lebel.

The corset of the period.

Now Lebel's nominal position at court was merely that of valet de chambre to the king; but there was no man in the royal service who was more diligently courted by men and women of position than this same Lebel, and for no other reason save that it was generally known that he commanded all the approaches through which a woman might hope to reach the much coveted place of Favorite.

As it was necessary that the place should be filled by a married woman, it was agreed that Jeanette should be presented to Lebel as the wife of Jean's brother Guillaume,

who still had his home in the country. So much excited was the count over their good fortune in securing a guest of such distinction that he assumed personal charge of Jeanette's toilette, as well as of the dinner, and for two hours he divided his time between her dressing-room and the kitchen, to the despair of both cook and hair-dresser. He had his reward, however, for Lebel was conquered by the first smiling glance of his hostess, and to the count's question, "What think you of our new beauty?" he made answer, as he raised her hand to his lips: "She is worthy of the throne."

The company sat down to dinner, and the king's valet de chambre was so warm in his praise that the count began to fear that he had fallen in love with Jeanette himself, and would refuse to resign her to any one else.

Two days after the dinner the king's valet de chambre called again and, finding Jeanette alone, talked to her quite seriously of her personal charms and of the part which a woman like herself might assume under the conditions then existing in France.

" Fearing to compromise myself," relates Madame Du Barry, " I made no reply, but maintained the reserve which my character imposed upon me. I saw that he really thought me the sister-in-law of Count Jean, and I left him in all his error, which was material to my interests. I am not clever, my friends; I never could conduct an intrigue. I feared to speak or do wrong; and, whilst I kept a tranquil appearance, I was internally agitated at the absence of Count Jean.

" Fortune sent him to me. He was crossing the street when he saw at our door a carriage with the royal livery, which Lebel always used when his affairs did not demand a positive incognito. This equipage made him suspect a visit from Lebel and he came in opportunely to extricate me from my embarrassment.

" ' Sir,' said Lebel to him, when he entered, ' here is the lady whose extreme modesty refuses to listen to what I dare not thus explain to her.'

" ' Is it anything I may hear for her?' said the count, with a smiling air.

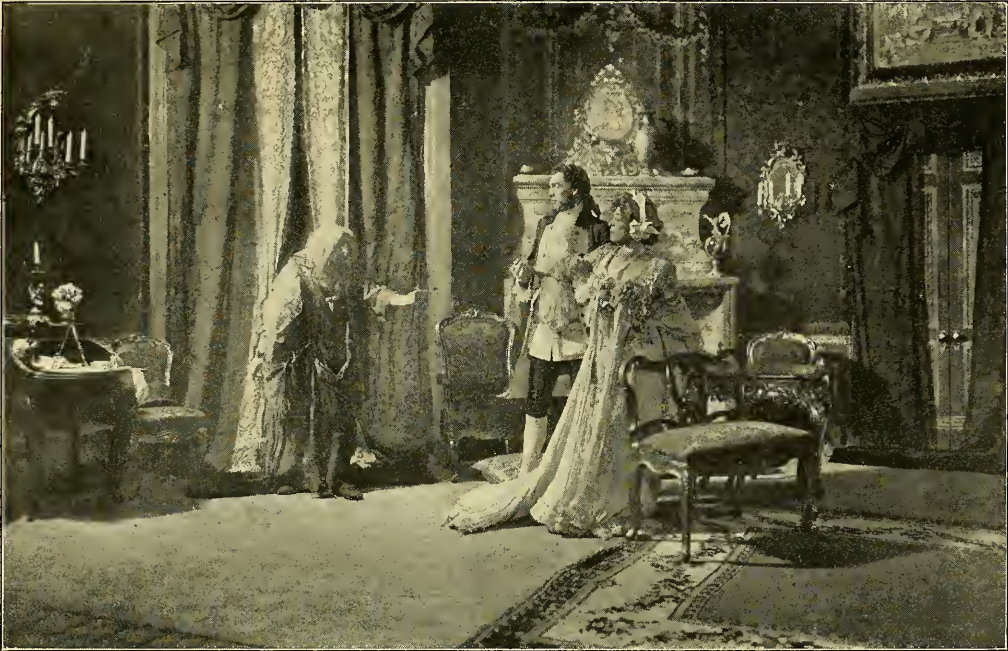
" ' Yes, I am the ambassador of a mighty

power; you are the minister plenipotentiary of the lady, and with your leave we will go into your private room to discuss the articles of the secret treaty which I have been charged to propose to you. What says madame?'

"'I consent to anything that can come from such an ambassador,' was my answer, and thereupon Count Jean led him into another room."

In this private interview the ambassador informed the plenipotentiary that the king had become deeply interested in the description he had given to him of the charms of the ravishing Madame Du Barry, and that he desired an interview with her in order that he might himself be the judge of her beauty.

The count, naturally enough, was agreeable to this proposal, and Lebel continued, saying that he intended to entertain the king and several of his court, including the famous Duc de Richelieu, at supper the following evening. He had promised His Majesty that Madame Du Barry should be one of the party.



An Ominous Visit.

The count eagerly accepted, in the name of his supposed sister-in-law, the valet's invitation, and no sooner had the carriage with the royal liveries rolled away than he hastened to the room where the one-time sweetheart of Nicolas the pastry-cook sat waiting to learn the results of the interview, her brain dazzled at the mere thought of becoming the mistress of His Most Christian Majesty, Louis XV.

"Victory!" cried the count, delightedly as he entered the chamber. "Victory, my dear Jeanette! To-morrow you sup with the king!"

And on receipt of this information, we learn that dear Jeanette turned pale, lost her strength completely and was compelled to sit, or rather to fall into a convenient chair. When she had recovered a little, Count Jean told her of his interview with Lebel, and advised her as to the course that she should follow should she become the Favorite of the king.

"To-morrow you will be everything!" he cried with energy; "but we must think about this morrow. Make haste, noble

countess. Go to all the milliners — seek what is elegant, rather than what is rich. Be as lovely, pleasing, and gay as possible; this is the main point — and God will do all the rest."

Late on the following day, the Du Barrys presented themselves at Versailles, and were eagerly received by Lebel, who came forward, saying: "Ah, madame, I began to fear you might not come. You have been looked for with an impatience — "

"Which can hardly equal mine," interrupted Madame Du Barry; "for you were prepared for your visitor, whilst I am yet to learn who is the friend that so kindly desires to see me."

"It is better that it should be so," added Lebel. "Do not seek either to guess or discover more than that you will here meet with some cheerful society, — friends of mine who will sup at my house, but with whom circumstances prevent my sitting down at table."

"How!" she exclaimed with affected surprise. "Not sup with us?"

"Even so," replied Lebel, and then added,

with a laugh, "he and I sit down to supper together! What an idea! No, you will find that just as the guests are about to sit down at table I shall be suddenly called out of the room, and shall only return at the close of the repast."

Had Jeanette Du Barry been a woman of greater experience in the ways of the polite world, it is not at all unlikely that her history would never have been written, and that her acquaintance with royalty would have begun and ended at the little supper in which Louis XV bore the title of the Baron de Gonesse, and at which no cover was laid for the plebeian host. If there was one moment in her life in which she deserves praise, — and, to do her justice, there were many, — it was this one of such great importance to her. Instead of endeavoring to charm the man whom she knew to be her king by imitating the airs, graces, and affectations of a society with which he had long been surfeited, instead of simulating the embarrassment to which every woman resorted as a sort of tribute of homage to royalty, she had the good sense

to remain her own simple, natural self. Not for years had the worn-out monarch met a woman with such hoydenish exuberance of spirit, such beauty of face and form, such bright, lively chatter. With him it proved a case of love at first sight.

On her return to Paris the next day Jeanette received from him a magnificent diamond aigrette, worth at least sixty thousand francs, and the sum of two hundred thousand francs in bank-notes. Both she and Count Jean were well-nigh struck dumb with astonishment at the sight of these treasures, which, so the record runs, he divided into two equal parts, putting one into his own pocket, and the other into the *escritoire* of his *soi-disant* sister-in-law. And she in her turn bestowed a large *douceur* upon Henriette, her faithful maid, and before nightfall contrived to squander at least one-quarter of her share on all sorts of beautiful but unnecessary trifles.

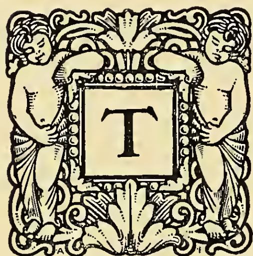
It is recorded also that that evening she and the Count Jean sat late in grave council. The different ministers and generals passed in review before them, to be retained

or dismissed as they thought best; new schemes of taxation — Heaven knows the people were taxed beyond all endurance then! — were seriously discussed, — in short, they began in idea to act as if sovereign power in France had already been bestowed upon the new Favorite.

"After all," said Jeanette Du Barry, "the world is but an amusing theatre, and I see no reason why a pretty woman should not play a pretty part in it."

CHAPTER IV

A NEW SUN ON THE HORIZON OF VERSAILLES



HE next day Madame Du Barry repaired again to Versailles, where the king was awaiting her with such impatience that he hastened to greet her while she was still at her dressing table completing her toilet. She was installed at once in a splendid apartment, attended by obsequious serving women, and from that moment had a regular establishment of attendants appointed for her special use.

That night, as the two sat in conversation over the supper-table, the king informed his new mistress, with a degree of fervor that left no shadow of doubt in

The Soothsayer's Prophecy.

her mind, that she was now no longer an obscure, friendless woman, but a personage very, very dear to the heart of the sovereign of France. To use the exact expression of Lebel, she was "the new sun which had arisen to illumine the horizon of Versailles."

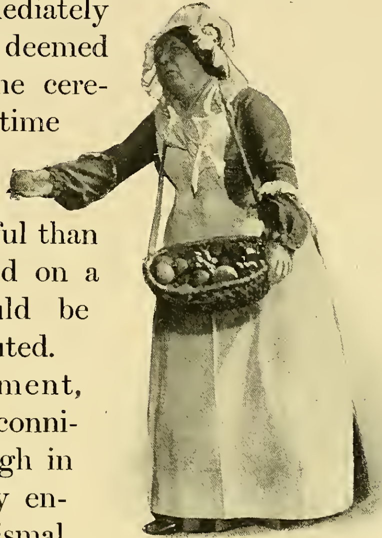
The Duc de Richelieu lost no time in doing homage to her, and brought with him the Duc d'Aiguillon, at that time one of the most powerful nobles in France. Moreover, women of fashion solicited places about her person, among them a certain Madame Saint Benoit, who became first lady of the bed-chamber, and remained with her during the whole period of her reign, her former maid, the faithful and beloved Henriette, contenting herself with the second place of honor.

A few days after the installation of the new Favorite, Lebel died in such a sudden manner that many believed him to have been poisoned. This was probably not the case, but it is certain that he became alarmed at the king's infatuation for his new mistress, and took it upon himself to explain to the monarch that she was not

worthy of his regard ; that she was not of noble or even of decent birth, and that she had lied in representing herself to be a married woman, whereas she was merely the latest sweetheart of Count Du Barry. So incensed did King Louis become at this frankness on the part of his faithful servitor that he actually threatened him with a pair of tongs and drove him from his presence, bidding him see that the lady was supplied with a husband without delay. It is not improbable that the excitement of this interview had much to do with Lebel's sudden death, but he lived long enough to transmit his sovereign's last command to Count Du Barry, and he, in his turn, hastened to write to his brother Guillaume, a young officer who was living at the family home in Toulouse, and apprised him of the brilliant marriage which he had arranged for him.

Guillaume, who seems to have shared his elder brother's willingness to do anything that was likely to augment his revenues, hastened to Paris, bringing with him the power of attorney by which his mother

authorized him, in accordance with French law, to contract marriage with such person as he might think fitting. The contract of marriage was immediately prepared, but it was deemed politic to delay the ceremony for a short time in order that a new certificate of birth, less shameful than the real one quoted on a previous page, could be forged and substituted.



Orange woman.

In this document, which, with the connivance of persons high in power, was actually entered in the baptismal register of the parish of Vaucouleurs, Jeanette is described as the daughter of Jean Jacques Gomard de Vaubernier and Anne Bécu, called Quantigny, and three years are taken from her age.

These arrangements having been made, the contract was duly drawn up and signed,

and on the first of September the marriage was celebrated. Immediately after the ceremony, the husband returned to Toulouse, and there is every reason to believe that he went with well-filled pockets. Persons of his class did not do business merely for the sake of their health in those days. As for the bride, she returned to Versailles and took possession of Lebel's quarters, moving from them a short time later to the apartment that had just been vacated by the Princess Adelaide. These rooms were situated in the second story, conveniently near the apartments of the king, who could pass from one to the other without being seen. During the remainder of the year 1768 the liaison was conducted in strict privacy, as the king was in deep mourning for the queen, who had recently died, and French etiquette forbade any public demonstration of affection until the end of a fitting period of grief.

That Louis XV was from the very first thoroughly infatuated with Jeanette Du Barry there can be no doubt. He loaded her with presents, allowed her to make un-

limited drafts on his treasury, and championed her cause in the many vexatious quarrels which the jealousy of the other courtiers forced upon her.

"How you all must have hated me in those days," she said, years after the king's death, while speaking to one of the great princesses of the realm.

"Not at all, my dear," was the amiable reply. "It was not that we hated you, but that we all wanted your place."

Jeanette Du Barry must have been a consummate actress, for while she was simulating an ardor for her lover that seemed fully as great as his own for her, she kept her senses about her to a degree that enabled her to make an estimate of his character that is well worth recording here. Nor does it read at all like the rhapsody of a love-sick young woman.

"Louis XV, King of France, was one of those sentimental egotists who believed he loved the whole world, his subjects, and his family; whilst in reality the sole engrossing object was self. Gifted with many personal and intellectual endowments which

might have disputed the palm with the most notable personages of the court, he was nevertheless devoured by ennui, which, by the way, he regarded as one of the necessary accompaniments of royalty. Devoid of taste in literary matters, he despised all connected with belles-lettres and esteemed men only in proportion to the number and richness of their armorial bearings. With him, M. de Voltaire ranked beneath the lowest country squire, and the very mention of a man of letters was terrifying to his imagination, because it disturbed the current of his own ideas.

"He revelled in the plenitude of power, yet felt dissatisfied with the mere title of king. He ardently desired to win renown as the first general of the age, and entertained the utmost jealousy of Frederick II of Prussia of whose exploits he spoke with undisguised spleen and ill-humor. The habit of commanding, and the prompt obedience he had always met with had long since palled upon his mind, and he cared nothing for what was so easily obtained. This satiety and listlessness were

In Comedy Vein.

by many attributed to a melancholy disposition. He disliked any appearance of opposition to his will, not that he particularly resented the opposition, but that he knew his own weakness, and feared lest he should be compelled to make a show of a firmness which he knew he did not possess.

"For the clergy he entertained the most superstitious veneration, and he feared God because he had a greater dread of the devil. In the hands of his confessor he believed was lodged absolute power to confer upon him the unlimited license to commit any and every sin. He greatly dreaded pamphlets, satires, epigrams, and the opinion of posterity, and yet his conduct was that of a man who scoffs at the world's judgment."

There is much truth in this intimate portrait of the man who, for nearly sixty years, was the constitutional ruler of France. No woman could have found a more powerful protector than he was; but his very power made the recipient of his favor a person to be hated, envied, and intrigued against by the other factions in the court.

So it happened that while there were many who, like the Duc de Richelieu, sought to ingratiate themselves with the Favorite, and to warm themselves in the rays of the new sun that had arisen on the horizon of Versailles, there were others who ranged themselves against her in open or secret hostility. Chief among these were the then prime minister, the Duc de Choiseul, and his sister, the Duchesse de Grammont. Between this powerful couple and the Favorite there was carried on a war which eventually brought about the dismissal of the prime minister from office, and ceased only with the death of the king and the downfall of his mistress.

The real cause of this enmity may be traced to the endeavors of the duchess, aided by her powerful brother, to obtain a mastery over the king, and secure for herself the post which had been vacant since the days of La Pompadour. In furtherance of this excellent project, the Duc de Choiseul had exercised eternal vigilance in regard to the moral welfare of the king, and had taken pains to nip in the bud any

indication of a passion that seemed likely to be lasting or serious.

On one occasion, about a year after Madame de Pompadour's death, an attempt was made by a court faction hostile to his own to install in the vacant place a young woman named Mademoiselle d'Esparbes, who had the most beautiful hands in Versailles, and who had charmed the æsthetic fancy of the sovereign by the dainty grace with which she employed her slender, beautiful fingers in picking cherries. She had already been honored with a suite of apartments at Marly, and all seemed to be going well, when Monsieur de Choiseul, who had been patiently biding his time, stopped her one day on the grand staircase, and, in the presence of the whole court, chucked her under the chin and said brutally: "How is your business going on, my girl?"

These words literally killed the whole scheme, for after this open affront the king, whose interest in the woman was very slight, did not deem it prudent to go any further, and a few days later her apartment was taken away from her, and she

herself received a letter under the royal seal, exempting her from paying court to the king, and commanding her to retire to the home of her father, the Marquis de Lussan, at Montauban.

After this episode the Duc de Choiseul felt tolerably sure that his own place was secure, and that it might be possible for him to install his sister in the place that she coveted. But Louis XV was tired of the government of political women. He had had enough of that sort of thing during the Pompadour reign, and had long since declared that no earthly power would induce him to take a mistress from the ranks of the nobility. But in spite of his increasing coldness toward her, the duchess continued in her efforts to charm him in a manner so open as to excite the raillery of the entire court circle.

The intrigue with Du Barry, she and her brother at first regarded with contempt. They thought that they saw in it the cunning handiwork of their natural enemy, Richelieu. And so both of them held aloof from the newcomer. Very soon,

however, the prime minister realized that a new power had arisen that might, in the end, prove a formidable rival to his own. He saw that he had no longer to deal with a passing caprice on the part of the king, but with a passion that had taken a strong hold on the royal heart and was growing stronger, instead of weaker, every day.

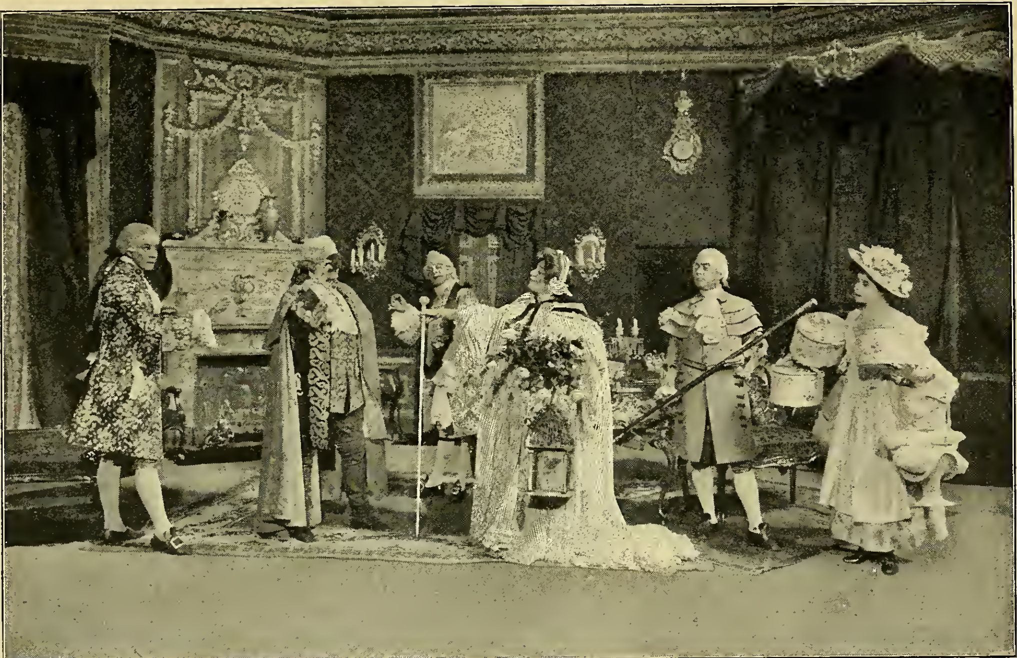
It was a serious discovery for him, but to his proud sister, who saw the place that she had coveted for herself filled by a mere waif from a milliner shop, it was maddening beyond her powers of endurance.

In a rage, she stirred her brother on to open hostilities, and made war herself by means of pamphlets, street ballads, vulgar verses and satirical newspaper articles. She raked up the past life of the Favorite, spiced it liberally with her own imagination, — which appears to have been not over clean, — and had it set to music under the name of "La Bourbonnaise." She even imbued Voltaire, who had always been an ally of her brother, with the idea for the pamphlet, "The King of Bedlam," in which

his wit passed over Madame Du Barry and found a target in the king himself.

Fully as bitter in their hostilities as the Duchesse de Grammont, although they did not deign to show it as she did, were the royal princesses, the daughters of the king. This is scarcely to be wondered at, especially when we consider the recent death of their mother. Nor is it surprising to learn that these ladies united in vigorous remonstrance when their father appropriated for the use of his new love the apartments which belonged to his daughter, the Princess Adelaide.

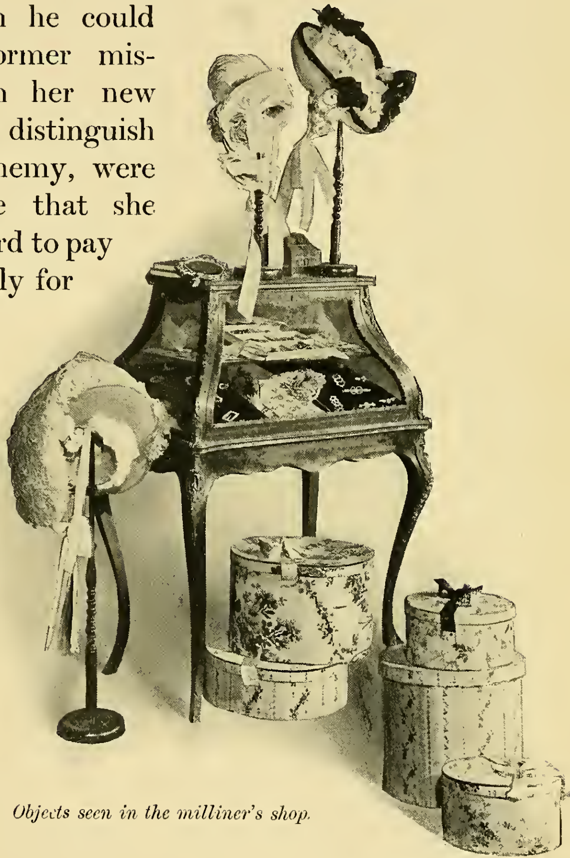
That Madame Du Barry was able to stem the tide of opposition that was raised against her during the early part of her reign, seems little short of marvellous when we consider her low origin, previous manner of life, and utter inexperience in the ways of a royal court. Her success, though due largely to her own good sense and good nature, probably owed a good deal to the constant care with which her brother-in-law, Count Jean, watched over her from his home in Paris, and gave her counsel



Her First Meeting with the King.

that helped her over every difficulty she encountered. Although thoroughly debased, he was nevertheless a man of talent and energy, and he knew too, that the services which he could render his former mistress, who in her new life could not distinguish friend from enemy, were of such value that she could well afford to pay him handsomely for them.

Between Versailles and Paris a corps of messengers was in continual service, carrying from Madame Du Barry letters of inquiry regarding even the



Objects seen in the milliner's shop.

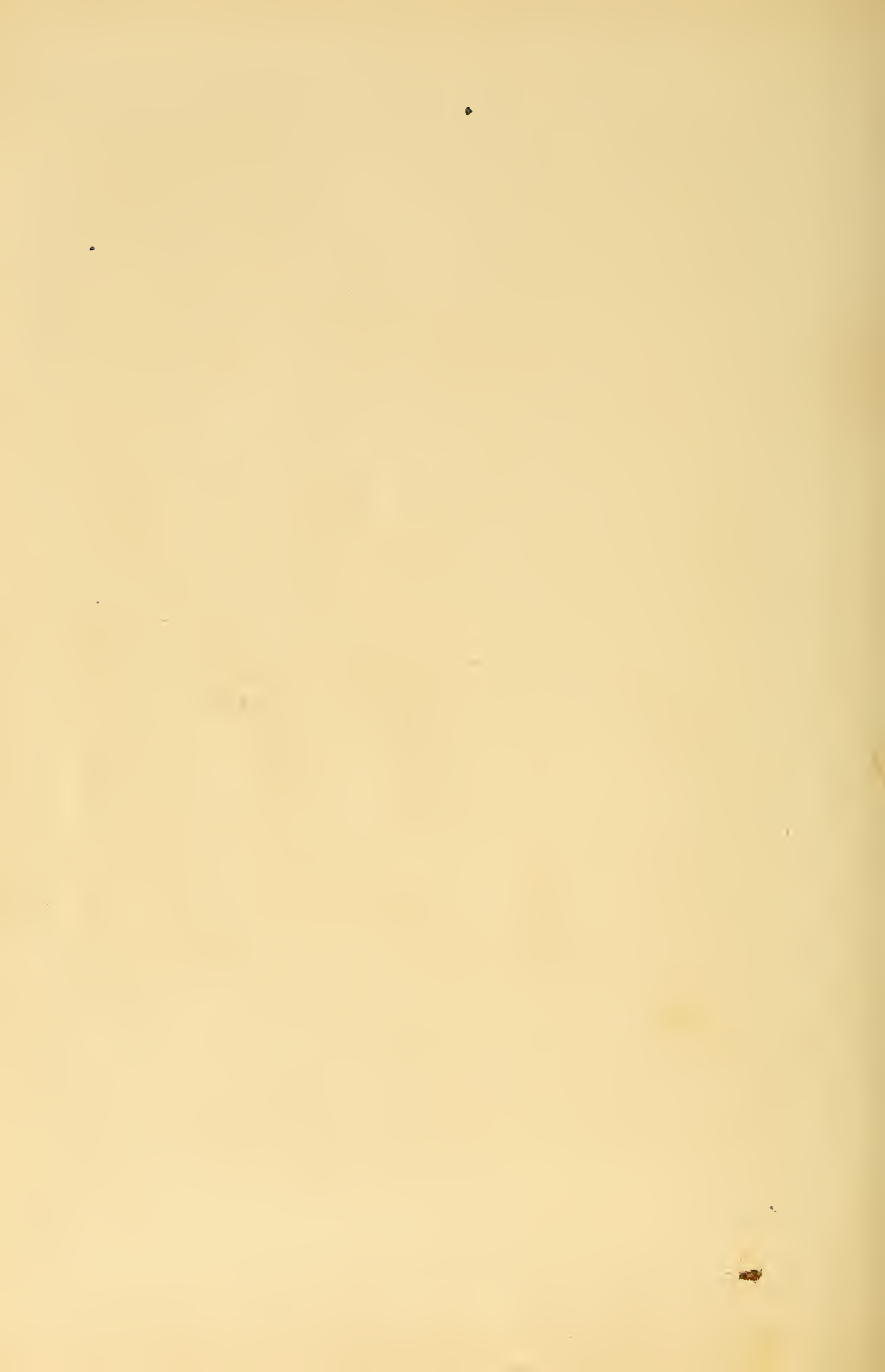
smallest details and bringing in return the most explicit and minute instructions from her crafty and experienced brother-in-law.

It is doubtful if the actress ever studied the great part in which she has won such signal triumphs on the mimic scene any more conscientiously and carefully than this young shop-girl did that of the extraordinary one that she was called upon to play at such short notice and with so little experience. Certainly both women were supremely fortunate in the matter of a stage director.

So well did the king's Favorite follow the instructions of her director, so much native aptitude did she display for her calling, that during the critical year which elapsed between her first meeting with the king and her formal presentation at court she did not once gratify her enemies by making herself ridiculous.

Moreover, she had found time and opportunity to strengthen her claims to a like recognition by means of a none too accurate genealogy of the Du Barry family, which had been prepared in England, under

A New Fancy.



the inspiration of the same brain that had conceived the idea of the false baptismal entry, and claiming for the Du Barry's blood-kinship with the famous Irish family of Barrymore. She had also obtained from the hand of her former lover some pamphlets reflecting on the character of her arch enemies, the Duchesse de Grammont and her brother the Duc de Choiseul.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTED AT COURT

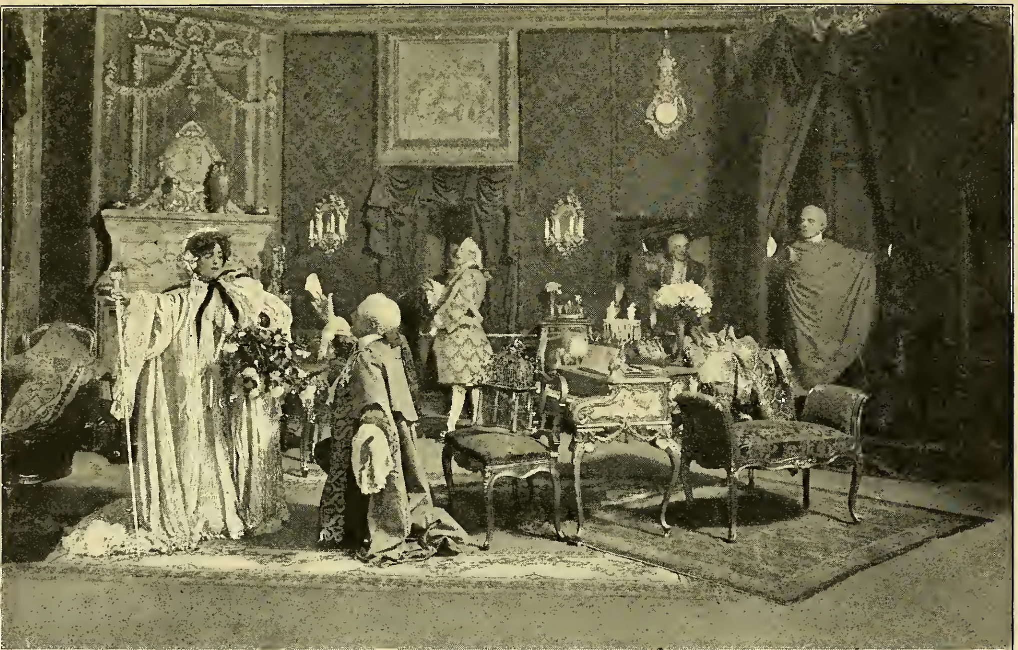
HER position in the personal regard of the king having become secure, the Favorite's next step was to secure the much-coveted and all-important honor of a formal presentation at his court. And in this, as in all other matters affecting her interests, she received the support and counsel of her brother-in-law.

To a woman in her anomalous position, this formal presentation at court was a matter of vital importance. Without it she was merely the king's mistress, the fancy of a passing moment, and, like others who hang on princes' favor, liable to be set aside the very instant that a fresh face found favor in the royal eyes.

Once presented at court, however, she had the right to live openly in the palace of her sovereign, to take her place in the world as a woman whose position in society was assured, to entertain ambassadors, statesmen and generals, give orders to the ministers, — in short, to have a voice in all matters of state.

From the very first Jean Du Barry had urged her not to cease in her efforts to secure for herself this distinction. He knew far better than she did how much it meant to a woman playing such a fascinating and hazardous game as the one in which she had taken a hand. When she seemed content with liberal presents of money and jewelry, when she expressed perfect confidence in the continuance of royal favor, simply because she found herself lodged in apartments that communicated easily with those of the king, it was Jean Du Barry who spurred her on to fresh exertions by showing her that all this meant no more than the capricious love of a man who had been lavishing money and diamonds on women all his life.

Of course this presentation was opposed by a very strong court faction. The powerful Duc de Choiseul sought in every possible way to prevent it, as did his sister, the Duchesse de Grammont. The daughters of the king, who had been inexpressibly mortified by their father's open lack of respect for the memory of his dead queen, were no less bitter in their opposition, and in their efforts they found many powerful allies in the most exalted court circles. These and other persons of the highest importance formed what seemed like an impenetrable wall about the throne of France. So great indeed was the opposition from within the ranks of his own family, as well as from those of his advisers, that the king, who seems to have had rare skill in the difficult art of keeping out of family rows, summoned his grand almoner, Monsieur de Vauguyon, and addressed him as follows: "La Vauguyon, you are a man of a thousand. Listen attentively to me. I wish much that the Countess Du Barry should be presented; I wish it, and that too in defiance of all that can be said and



Wooed by a Royal Lover.

done. My indignation is excited beforehand against all those who shall raise any obstacle to it. Do not fail to let my daughters know that if they do not comply with my wishes, I will let my anger fall heavily on all persons by whose counsels they may be persuaded; for I only am master and I will prove it to the last. These are your credentials, my dear duke, add to them what you may think fitting. I will bear you out in anything."

The prelate undertook this delicate commission, having first obtained from Madame Du Barry her promise that the weight of her influence would at all times be thrown in favor of the clerical party, to which he of course belonged, and not with their natural enemies, the philosophers or free-thinkers.

Armed with this assurance, he soon obtained from Madame Louise, the most pious and obedient of the king's daughters, her promise that she would yield to her father's wishes. The princesses Sophie, Adelaide, and Victoire he found less complacent, and it was only by the exercise on his part of the most adroit diplomacy and the most

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convincing and pious eloquence that he succeeded in persuading them that it was their duty, as daughters of the king, to set an example in obedience. Finally the four sisters met at the house of Madame Adelaide and decided that as the king had expressed himself so positively on the subject of the presentation they would receive his mistress with every mark of courtesy.

The almoner hastened to Madame Du Barry and informed her of his success. Her joy was so great that she embraced him with the greatest warmth and a few days later sent him a Chinese mandarin, fashioned in porcelain, on whose finger was placed a jewelled ring worth nearly forty thousand francs.

The opposition of the royal princesses having been silenced, the next difficulty that lay in the path that led towards the throne was that of obtaining a sponsor. The etiquette of the French court, very strict in this as in all other respects, demanded that every woman presented should have as a sponsor some other woman of title who was herself a member of the

king's court. Ordinarily, it was not difficult for a candidate to obtain, from among her own friends, a noblewoman qualified for the post of sponsor and willing to assume it. In the case of Madame Du Barry, however, the opposition was so strong and her notoriety so great that every woman who was approached on the subject either refused on one pretence or another, or else demanded for her services a sum so exorbitant as to stagger even such an extravagant woman as the Favorite. One lady who was applied to demanded a large sum of money for herself, the command of a regiment for her son, and for her husband, a government and the Order of the Holy Ghost. Another, the Marquise de Castellane of that day, stipulated that she should receive a gift of half a million francs and be created a duchess.

A *présenteuse* was found at last, thanks to the indefatigable energy of the Duc de Richelieu, in the person of a certain Madame de Bearn, who was a woman of great avarice and a chronic litigant as well. This lady was at this time one of the par-

ties in a law-suit involving several hundred thousand francs, and Madame Du Barry's influence with the chancellor of the kingdom was a consideration that had great weight with her. In addition to this influence, she demanded for herself a hundred thousand francs and a station in the royal household, and for her son, the command of a regiment.

Even when her demands had been acceded to, this avaricious countess had the effrontery to require the king's written promise, and it was only by an artful strategy on the part of Madame Du Barry that the matter was finally adjusted.

But although a sponsor had been found, the opposition of the Choiseul party was not silenced, and it was not until the mistress made a personal and tearful appeal to the king, aided by the influence of her friend the Duc de Richelieu, that that weak and vacillating monarch consented to the ceremony which should give her once and for all the status that she desired.

The presentation took place on the 22d of April, 1769, and on that day vast num-

bers of people went out from Paris to Versailles to witness the passage of the Favorite's carriage to the court. The excitement and interest manifested in this purely ceremonial act is not difficult to understand when we remember that to the clerical party, against which the Choiseul ministry had always arraigned itself, Madame Du Barry was not a mere courtesan, the toy of an indolent, pleasure-loving prince, but a veritable Moses sent for the salvation of the chosen people of the Church. In her, strange as it may seem to us of a different civilization, were centred to a large extent the hopes of the Jesuits, for had she not already given assurance through the grand almoner, who pleaded her cause with the royal princesses, that her influence would be thrown with that party? Therefore thousands of people gathered at the gates of the park in Versailles and waited patiently for the appearance of the carriage with her well-known livery.

Within the palace the king, nervous and ill at ease, stood waiting her coming, wondering at the delay, for the hour had long

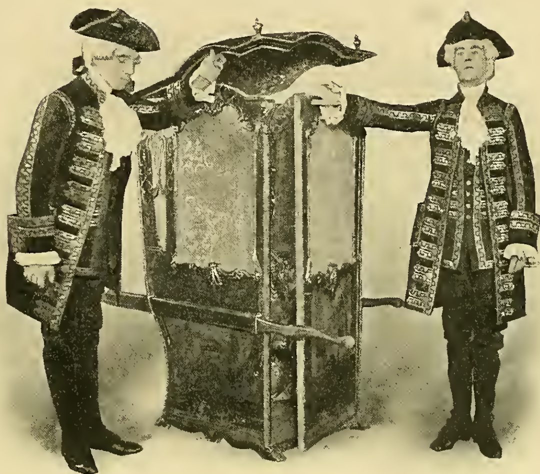
since passed, and annoyed by the clamor that was borne to his ears from the throngs about the gates. Choiseul, standing beside him, grew more and more exultant as each passing minute diminished the chance of the presentation taking place that day. On the other side of the royal person stood Richelieu in his capacity of first gentleman, watching through the window with the corner of his eye and hoping, almost against hope, that the familiar equipage would come within his range of vision.

"What means all this uproar? Why are all those people gathered about the gates?" demanded the king of his minister.

"Sire," replied Choiseul, in sarcastic tones that were almost jubilant, "the people have learned that Madame Du Barry is to be presented to-day, and they have hurried here from every point of the compass in order that they may at least witness her arrival, as they are not able to be at the reception which your Majesty will give her."

A moment later Louis XV glanced at the clock, and then opened his lips for the purpose of countermanding or postponing

the presentation, but at this instant Richelieu caught sight of the Favorite's carriage crossing the great court and exclaimed, "Sire, here is Madame Du Barry."



Sedan chair.

Woman-like, and knowing, too, the vast importance of looking her best that day, she had lingered too long at her dressing-table. But, if the chronicles of that period are to be believed, the results were well worth the sacrifice of time. For neither canvas nor marble has ever fitly repro-

duced those charming seductions of form and that exquisite beauty of face in which were realized the ideal of eighteenth century beauty. There was one portrait of her, however, which, though it but faintly pictured her charms, nevertheless moved Voltaire to exclaim, "The original was made for the gods!"

Her hair was long, silky, curling like the hair of a child, and blonde with an exquisite auburn tint. Her eyebrows and eyelashes were dark and curly, and beneath them the blue eyes, which one seldom saw quite open, looked out with coquettish sidelong glances. The nose was small and finely cut, and the mouth a perfect Cupid's bow. The neck, the arms, her feet and her hands reminded one of ancient Greek statuary, while her complexion was that of a rose-leaf steeped in milk. She carried with her a delicious atmosphere of intoxicating, victorious, amorous youth.

Her costume was a triumph of the dressmaker's art and was of the kind called by the women of her century "a fighting costume." Diamonds worth 150,000 francs,

Jean Du Barry and Jeanette.

the king's gift of the day before, still further adorned her and contributed to a beauty that was so radiant and dazzling that even her bitterest enemies were able to comprehend the power that she exercised over the king. The Countess de Bearn, also gorgeously attired, appeared with her, delighted to have a share in the pomp and splendor of the occasion. The royal princesses, true to the promise given their father, received her with a degree of amiability and courtesy which carried consternation to the hearts of the Choiseul faction. They would not suffer her to kneel before them, but hastened to raise her in the most gracious manner when she began to perform that act of homage.

The king himself was even more gracious in his manner towards her. She had made a bet with him the day before, that he would not permit her to bend the knee to him, for he had threatened to permit her to fall at his feet without making the least effort to prevent it. Now, as he took her hand when she began to stoop before him, she exclaimed, "You have lost, sire."

"How is it possible to preserve my dignity in the presence of so many graces?" he exclaimed in a voice loud enough to be heard by those who stood near by.

That evening Jeanette Du Barry entertained at her house a score of the highest dignitaries in the land, in the presence of whom the king embraced her warmly, saying: "You are a charming creature," a compliment which was quickly echoed on all sides, and the next day all Paris knew that her place by the king's left hand was permanent and secure.

In the mere act of this presentation, in the cabals which favored or opposed it, in the great significance with which it was invested, and in the splendor of the function itself, there is material for a great drama. In the play of *Du Barry*, however, it is not touched upon.

CHAPTER VI

THE PETIT LEVÉE

N the third act of his play the dramatist teaches the present generation, in a manner so vivid that no one can see it without carrying away a lasting recollection of it, what it meant to be the favorite of a Bourbon king a century and a half ago.

In this act Madame Du Barry is shown in the bedroom of her apartments at Versailles, holding one of the *petits levées* which were of such ordinary occurrence in those days. By this time the presentation has taken place, her power is acknowledged by all, and there is no prince or princess of the blood royal, no woman of the *haute noblesse*, no dignitary of the church, state,

or army who is above coming there to do her homage.

To the student of history, this gathering in the bedchamber of the most talked-of Frenchwoman of her day is a scene of the deepest interest. She is still in the heart of her quarrel with Choiseul, and her visitors this morning are many of them from the ranks of her own personal supporters.

The most distinguished of these guests, next to the king himself, is the polished and sin-worn old diplomat, the Duc de Richelieu, who comes tripping in to pay his court to the Favorite with all the smirks and graces of a nobleman of the old régime. Accomplished as he is in the arts of the courtier, familiar by long experience and practice in the school of diplomacy, with the consummate and subtle art of masking his feelings and intentions behind a face that smiles and gives no sign, he has not been clever enough to deceive the woman whose knowledge of court customs has been gained within a single twelvemonth. In the vernacular of to-day, she has "sized him up" long ago, and her impressions of his

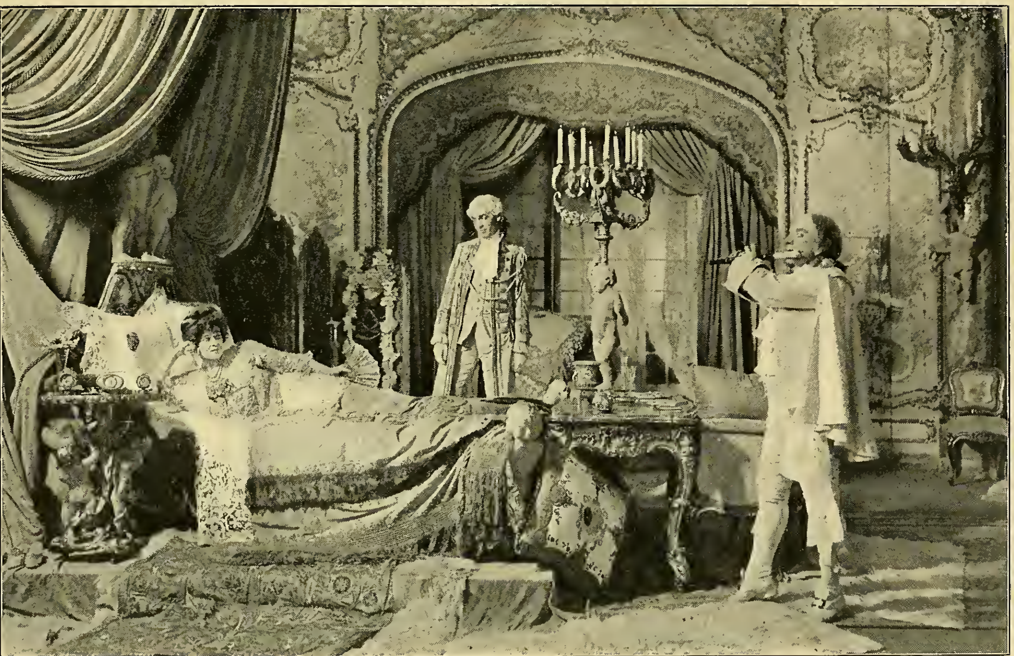
character have been handed down to us in the following words:

"This nobleman," she says, "when in his seventy-second year, had preserved all his former pretensions to notice. His success in so many love affairs — a success which he never could have merited — had rendered him celebrated. He was now a superannuated coxcomb, a wearisome and clumsy butterfly. When, however, he could be brought to exercise his sense by remembering that he was no longer young, he became fascinating beyond description, from the finished ease and grace of his manner and the polished and piquant style of his discourse. Still I speak of him as a mere man of outward show, for his attainments were superficial, and he possessed more of the jargon of a man of letters than the sound reality. He possessed a most ignoble turn of mind. All feelings of an elevated nature were wanting with him. A bad son, an unkind husband, and a worse father, he could scarcely be expected to become a steady friend. All whom he feared, he hesitated not to trample under-

foot, and his favorite maxim was, 'We should never hesitate to set our foot upon the necks of all those who might in any way interfere with our progress.' 'Dead men tell no tales,' he would always add. Between himself and Voltaire, who called him the 'tyrant of the tennis court,' a strong personal enmity always existed."

Another important visitor is Monsieur de Maupeou, at that time the Lord Chancellor of the king, and of whom Madame Du Barry says:

"Monsieur de Maupeou possessed one of those firm and superior minds, which, in spite of all obstacles, changes the face of Empires. Ardent, yet cool; bold, but reflective; neither did the clamors of the populace astonish, nor obstacles arrest him. He went on in the direct path which his will chalked out. Quitting the magistracy, he became its most implacable enemy, and, after a deadly combat, he came off conqueror. He felt that the moment had arrived for freeing royalty from the chains which it had imposed upon itself. It was necessary, he has said to me a hundred



The Flute Player.

times, for the kings of France in past ages to have a popular power on which they could rely for the overturning of the feudal power. 'Before fifty years,' he said to me once, 'kings will be nothing in France, and parliaments will be everything.' As brave, personally, as a marshal of France, his enemies, and he had many, called him a coarse and quarrelsome man. Hated by all, he despised men in a body, and jeered at them individually. Insensible to the charms of our sex, he only thought of us casually and as a means of relaxation."

Another notable figure at the *petit levée* is the Abbé Terray, the Minister of Finance. This astute and utterly unprincipled politician was not slow in allying himself with the faction that gathered about the Favorite, and she, on her part, could not have found a more docile or useful supporter. As Controller-General of the Finances of the Kingdom, he literally held the purse-strings, and he was politic enough to loosen them whenever the king's mistress commanded. That he was frequently called upon to do so, may be

inferred from the richness of the bedchamber and its furnishings, as well as from the fact that during the five years of her reign, Madame Du Barry's personal expenditures amounted to over twelve million livres, a sum of money whose purchasing capacity about equalled that of the same number of dollars at the present day. Her dressmaker's bill alone amounted to a quarter of a million livres a year, and she had already found that silver, even when it was the work of the very best craftsmen in France, was not good enough for her, and must be replaced by solid gold. There was a toilet service ordered in the same precious metal, and the government paid to Roettiers, the greatest carver of plate in France, the sum of fifteen hundred gold marks as an advance payment, before he would undertake the work. But scandal, caused by this piece of useless extravagance, put a stop to the work, and the gold toilet service was never finished.

It is not unlikely that an understanding existed between Madame Du Barry and the Abbé Terray, through which the Minister

of Finance secured for himself a percentage of what he permitted her to squander. It is a matter of history that his mistress, known in fashionable Parisian circles by the name of La Sultane, received money, presumably in collusion with the Abbé, for every act of favor or justice solicited from the department which he controlled. Indeed, this degraded creature and Madame Sabatin, the mistress of the Duc de la Vrillière, kept open shop for the sale of preferments of all kinds.

The Count Jean Du Barry is also a visitor at the *petit levée*, nor is it surprising to see him in quest of money. The class of men to which he belongs is one that in all ages has found its chief support in the earnings of frail women. It is a class, by the way, which has not yet passed from off the face of the earth, and has its representatives in the good society of the present day as well as in the slums. Jean Du

Punch bowl.

Barry, who has always been known as a man of extravagant tastes, is now rapacious in his demand, and, from what we know of his character, we do not feel that the dramatist has strayed far from historical accuracy when he reveals him in the light of a blackmailer.

His Eminence, the Papal Nuncio, is here too in the mimic scene, as he frequently was in the flesh when the real Madame Du Barry held her *petits levées* in the great palace of Versailles. Moreover he seems to be a trusted adviser, as well as a friend who lends the weight of his influence in her behalf in her quarrel with the king.

Another guest is the young girl of sixteen, the Princess Marie Antoinette, to whose memory clings the tragic pathos of a queen's martyrdom.

" She appeared to me less beautiful and fair than pleasant and ladylike," says Madame Du Barry, in describing the impression made on her by this young princess on her first arrival from Austria. " Her hair was of a reddish auburn, but her skin was of a dazzling white. She had

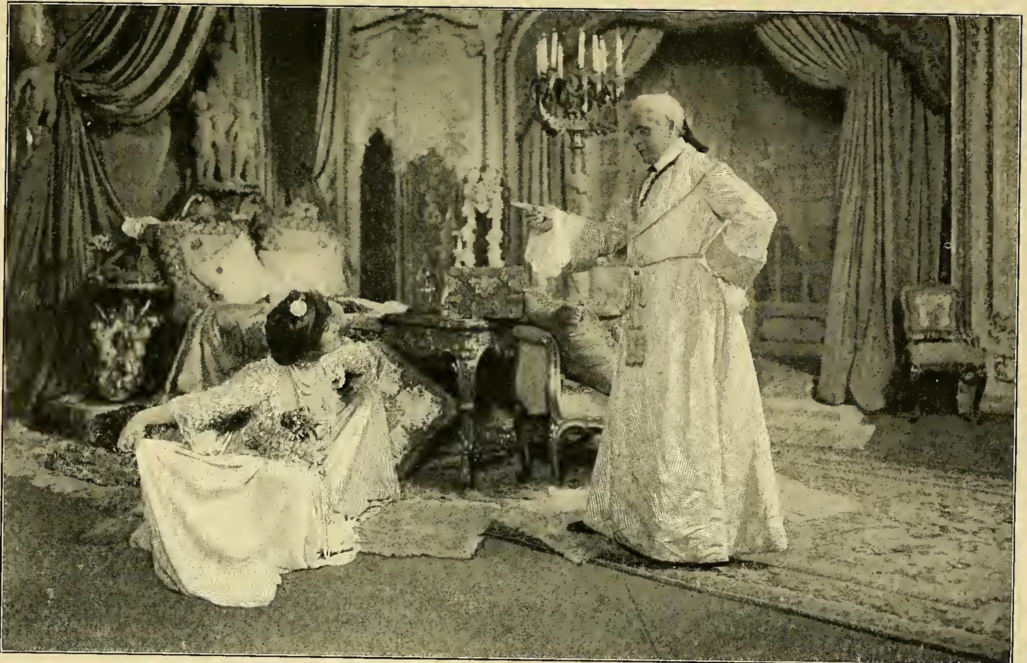
a beautiful forehead, a delicious set of teeth, a well-formed nose, and eyes full of vivacity and expression. Her air was majestic and dignified. She walked well; her figure was well shaped, and her gestures were more free and unstudied than those of the princesses of the blood royal of France."

This princess, however, did not have a good opinion of the Favorite, toward whom her conduct at first was so frigid that the king summoned the Austrian ambassador, Mercy-Argenteau, explained to him his wishes, and bade him use whatever influence he possessed to induce her to conform to them. The ambassador, alarmed at the prospect of anything like coolness between the two royal houses, and knowing how much trouble can be brought about by the obstinacy of one young woman, instantly despatched letters to his sovereign, the Empress Maria Theresa, in which he explained to her the precise state of affairs at the French court. He described the infatuation of the king for the new Favorite, and took pains to relate the manner in which His Majesty showed his displeasure

when the least slight was put upon her. In view of these conditions, he begged the empress to use her influence with her daughter, and persuade her to address a few civil words to a woman whom the king had honored by his regard. The empress saw the force of his argument, and wrote at once to her daughter, urging her to remember what was due the king at whose court she was living. At last, in obedience to her mother, Marie Antoinette consented to receive the Favorite; and statesmen, who had foreseen, as an outcome of her obstinacy possible trouble with Austria, breathed freely again.

Whether or no the dauphiness ever overcame her feeling of repugnance toward Madame Du Barry to such an extent as to attend one of her *petits levées,* is a fact on which history throws but little light, so we may accept the picture as the dramatist has painted it for us. Certainly her presence in this scene lends a new interest to it.

Denys, the faithful servant who follows Madame Du Barry's changing fortunes to their bitter end, is a character who really



A Courtesy to Royalty.

existed, and who was deeply attached to his mistress.

Another type of servitor was Zamore, the black dwarf, whom we see squatting on a rug beside the Favorite's bed. Creatures of this sort were frequently maintained in luxurious houses in those days, in Paris and in London as well. We encounter them, more than once, in the pictures which Hogarth painted of dissolute London life of exactly that time. Zamore received innumerable favors at the hands of Madame Du Barry and her royal lover, but, in the end, turned against her, and at her trial gave testimony which contributed materially to her conviction.

Madame Du Barry had received Zamore at the hands of the usually penurious Duc de Richelieu, who turned him over to her, clad in his native garb of pleated grass and adorned with bracelets, earrings and necklace of solid gold, fashioned in barbaric style. He was a hideously ugly little savage with no more respect for persons than one would have looked for in a monkey. He was funny, however, in a rude simian way,

and could make grimaces and distort his puny body in such a way as to set his mistress off into roars of laughter. He had scant respect for her visitors, and was wont to amuse himself and the company by snatching the wig from the head of some aged courtier, leaving his victim a bald target for the laughter of the rest.

Pleasantries of this order seem to have been rather to the taste of his Most Christian Majesty, Louis XV, for history tells us that once, in appreciation of some particularly entrancing exhibition of this subtle and engrossing form of humor, he rewarded the young African with the post of governor of the Château of Louveciennes, an office carrying with it a salary of one thousand crowns.

The Jeanette Du Barry who figures in this act has made distinct progress along her chosen path since we last saw her in the gambling house. It is true that she is, at heart, the same wanton, good-hearted, good-tempered young woman whose chief concern is for the pleasures of this life ; but now her destiny is assured, whereas her life

at the gaming house was merely a preliminary glance into the brilliant, dissolute and luxurious world that lay before her. Now she has realized the very highest dream that any woman of her class ever dared to indulge in. The all-powerful king of France is madly in love with her, and there is nothing, from the dismissal of a minister to the price of a jewelled bauble, that she may not ask and receive at his hands.

I declare that I can think of no more instructive spectacle, nor of one better worth the consideration of a philosopher, than that of this pampered mistress reclining in her splendid bed, with the gorgeously caparisoned ape, Zamore, by her side, and ministers, prelates and royalty gathering to do her honor.

The chief interest in this act is one of love, and here the inventive genius of the dramatist comes into play. Having taken the love between Jeanette Du Barry and Cossé-Brissac as the chief motive of his drama, Mr. Belasco avails himself of his dramatic license to assume that there was

jealousy on the part of the king, and, logically enough, that that jealousy resulted in a bitter quarrel between himself and his mistress. He shows us, too, how the heart of woman, even though that woman be the Favorite of a king, must break all artificial bonds imposed by high station and self-interest and rule her whole life.

It is reasonable enough to assume that Jeanette Du Barry had more than one love affair beside that supreme one with the king, during the period of her reign. Hostile historians, who pander to that horror of immorality and taste for reading about it which characterizes Anglo Saxon virtue, ascribe to her a legion of sweethearts, and her own memoirs indicate that she was not altogether true to the king.

Certainly she must have had plenty of idle time on her hands; for, although she had succeeded Madame de Pompadour in the royal esteem, she was wise enough not to challenge comparison between herself and her predecessor by mixing too much in affairs of state.

The Pompadour had been a woman of

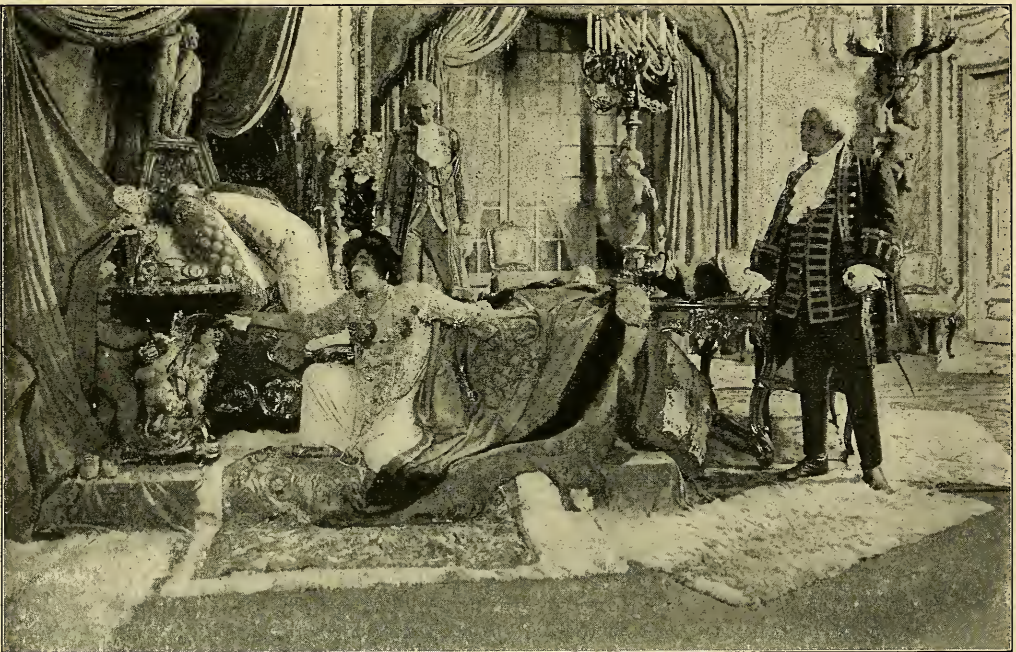
distinct influence in the affairs of the world. Not only had she amused the king with her theatre, her conversation, her supper parties, and the brilliant men and women whom she gathered together for his entertainment, but she had also sought to relieve him of many of the serious duties of his exalted position. Her life had been one of constant intrigue; of intimacy with cabinet ministers, statesmen and men of business; of interest in politics, — in short, her rôle was one of actual power openly exercised.

Madame Du Barry, on the other hand, was content with her position as Favorite, and, apart from her struggle with the Choiseuls and the various squabbles with the ladies of the court into which she was drawn, she did not figure prominently in the affairs of her time. Her chief delight was in spending money, and nowhere is the real history of the reign more accurately summed up than in the four volumes of her expense accounts purchased some years ago by the National Library.

Like every woman of her class, she was

passionately fond of the luxuries of life, and utterly heedless of their cost so long as there was some one to pay the bills for her. In these accounts we read of dresses costing from one to ten thousand livres, of a watch costing nearly six thousand francs, of the same sum spent for the gildings on her bed, of lace that cost three or four thousand livres for each dress, of superb furniture, of bronzes, of everything, in short, that the richly decorative age of Louis XV could supply.

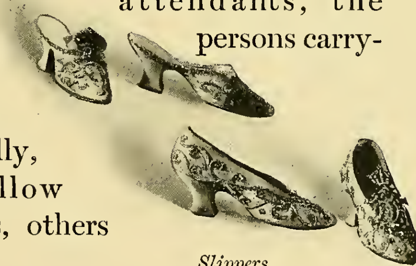
The morning receptions in her bedchamber were not given over altogether to the visits of personages of distinction. It was at this time that tradesmen came to her with their newest and choicest wares, and workmen received instructions and submitted to her the half-completed articles of beauty and utility which she had ordered, and which she loved to inspect from time to time. That her taste was good, is evident from such of her possessions as are still in existence. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we remember the great influence that the demi-monde has



The Father of Cossé-Brissac.

always exerted on the dress, jewelry and other ornaments of the polite world.

The de Goncour Memoirs have this to say about Moreau's picture of a fête given by the Favorite in honor of her royal lover at her Château of Louveciennes, December 27, 1771: "Throughout the apartment, all white and gold, a vapor of light seems to rise from the lustres hanging in front of the mirror between the columns, shedding on them flashes to which other flashes respond in other mirrors, handfuls of flame which fling into the air four figures of women carved in marble by Pajou, Le Count, and Moineau, and standing on marble socles with golden wreaths. Around the table, surrounded by curious lookers-on, behind the round backs of the armchairs and the clubs of the chattering guests' perukes, the attendants, the servants, the persons carrying dishes, keep coming and going rapidly, some in yellow straw liveries, others



Slippers.

in crimson velvet coats with facings, with blue collars and wristbands, with white boot-tops and white gaiters, three-cornered hats on their heads, and swords by their sides. You see even little Zamore in a turban with feathers, a rose-colored vest and breeches, gliding towards a lady who has doubtless left some bonbons on her plate. The crystal, the silver, the structure representing an opera scene, which rises above the tablecloth, the *cordons bleus*, the diamonds, the smiles on the faces of the guests, all keep the table in a glow; and in the brilliant light shed around them is seen, by the side of Madame Du Barry's pretty countenance, the handsome, noble face of Louis XV."

There is more than a suggestion of all this in the superb scene which constitutes the fourth act of Mr. Belasco's play, — the act in which the highest point of dramatic interest is attained. It is in this act, too, that the dramatist touches the deepest and most significant note in his entire work.

It is not easy to convey, in mere words, an adequate idea of the splendid picture of

luxury that is set before us here under the rays of a smiling harvest moon. Up and down the marble steps and across the stage, ambassadors, noblemen, and court ladies come and go, laughing gayly and with no thought save for the caprice or intrigue or ambition of the moment. Opera-dancers whirl and pirouette on tiptoe for the entertainment of the guests; clowns, all in white, come somersaulting across the floor; tables are spread in sumptuous fashion; a huge bowl of flaming brandy punch is served, and the guests amuse themselves by throwing about illuminated balls. At a signal from the mistress, servants, bearing a score of rich candelabra, come upon the scene, and the stage is lit up with that real candlelight which electricity cannot counterfeit.

Never, perhaps, has our stage presented such a luxurious and gorgeous spectacle as this. But beneath it all there is an ominous note that we, whose vision has been made clear with the light of after-knowledge, cannot help seeing. The writing is on the wall, but there is no Daniel to

interpret it. The keen, glittering knife that the actress sees in fancy from the moment when she first comes on the stage, is hanging over a score of those bewigged and bepowdered heads.

Valois, the young revolutionary, has already been brought in by the guards, and, before he can be taken away to execution, has contrived to fling in the faces of his captors, a word of defiant warning; but they give him no heed. Now, however, from without the gates, comes the noise of angry mutterings and discontent, for the people, starved and over-taxed to support all this riotous waste, are clamoring for bread. Their murmurings reach the ears of Louis the Well Beloved, and he comes striding out of his palace to demand its cause.

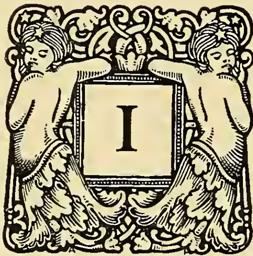
"Am I king or not, that this rabble should disturb my pleasure?" he cries haughtily. And which one of us is there so dull and devoid of imagination as not to catch a glimpse of the gleaming knife conjured up by his words?

The soldiers go out to disperse the mob,

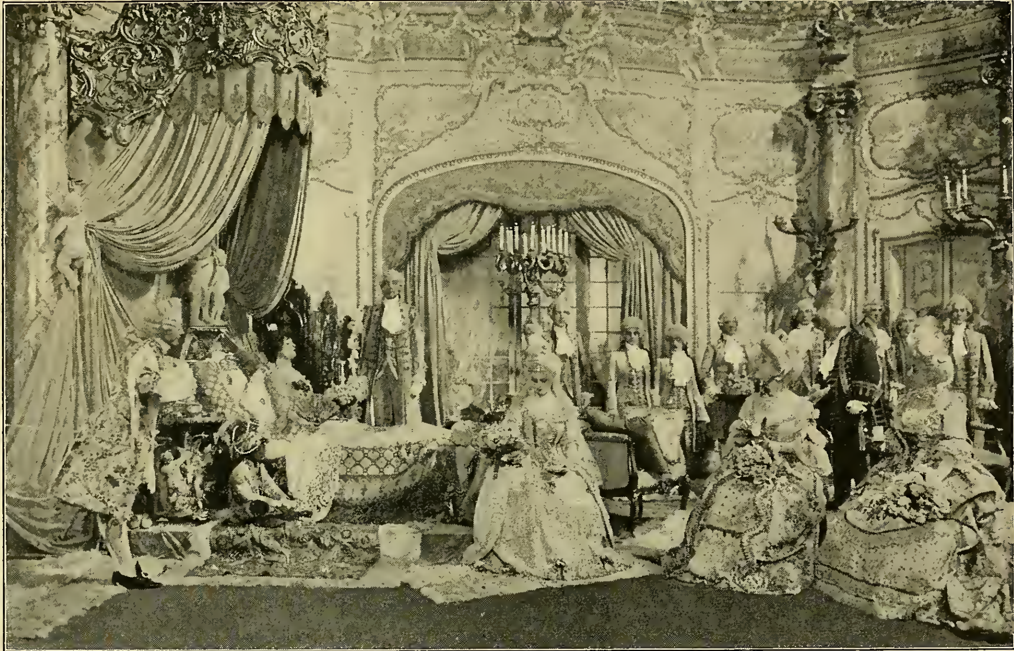
and their clamor ceases; the distant roll of the drums tells us that the name of Valois has been written in his own blood upon the long roll of those who have died for principle; the king and his bejewelled mistress again lead the court in the mad hunt after pleasure, but that clamor at the outer gates is one that will not down. A powdered head will fall for every drop of Valois blood that has been shed to-night.

CHAPTER VII

A PRIME MINISTER'S DOWNFALL



IN the month of July of the year 1769, Sir Horace Walpole writes as follows: "Well! I am going to a quiet little town where they have had nothing but one woman to talk of for this twelvemonth, — I mean Paris. Madame Du Barry gains ground, and yet Monsieur de Choiseul carries all his points. He has taken Corsica, bought Sweden, made a pope, got the Czarina drubbed by the Turks, and has restored the Parliament of Bretagne, in spite of the Duc D'Aiguillon, — for revenge can make so despotic and ambitious a man as Choiseul even turn patriot, — and yet at this moment I believe he dreads my



The Petit Levée.

Lord Chatham more than Madame Du Barry."

Time has shown, however, that the great minister who was at one time the virtual master of France had more to fear from the French courtesan than from the English statesman. The struggle between himself, egged on by his sister, the Duchesse de Grammont, on the one side, and the Favorite, aided by her own faction, on the other, resulted at last in the dismissal of the minister. Before this final catastrophe, however, occurred a *contretemps* between the two women that may be said to have served as a prelude to his downfall.

As may be easily believed, the duchess was one of the first to pay court to the dauphiness, Marie Antoinette, on her arrival at Versailles, and so skilful was she in the art of making herself agreeable, that the princess conceived a strong liking for her, and consulted her on innumerable subjects relating to her life at court.

Now it is related that this young princess was so innocent in regard to worldly wickedness, that she once artlessly asked who Mad-

ame Du Barry was, and what her precise status was in the *entourage* of Louis XV. It is not likely that the Duchesse de Grammont, who had perhaps been waiting for a convenient opportunity to express herself, permitted the future Queen of France to remain longer in the dark concerning the character and antecedents of her grandfather's mistress. Possibly she was one of those *raconteurs* who, as the Irish say, "never let a story go out without a cocked hat and a cane." Certain it is that nothing could equal the abhorrence with which Marie Antoinette regarded the Favorite, and the latter was not slow to attribute this feeling to the efforts of her arch enemy, the duchess. She complained to the king again and again, but her lover did not like to be drawn into quarrels not his own, and it was not until the duchess affronted the woman whom she detested in his presence, and in such a manner that he felt himself aggrieved, that he exerted his authority.

It was at a moment when both ladies were on their way to a levée held by the dauphin, and the duchess, while trying to

pass the other, set her foot upon her train in such a way as to tear it to tatters, after which, without a word of apology, she went on her way laughing loudly. It is difficult to imagine what Madame Du Barry would not have done to the duchess if she had not chanced to read in the face of the king, who had been a witness of the affair, an expression of rage and offended dignity which told her that she could safely leave the task of avenging her outraged feelings in his hands.

That very day the king summoned the Duchesse de Grammont to his presence, sternly rebuked her for what she had done, and then banished her from his court for a period of two years. Even the remonstrances and entreaties of her brother failed to have any effect, and the next day the duchess departed, and the polite world realized that Madame Du Barry's influence with the king was even greater than had been believed.

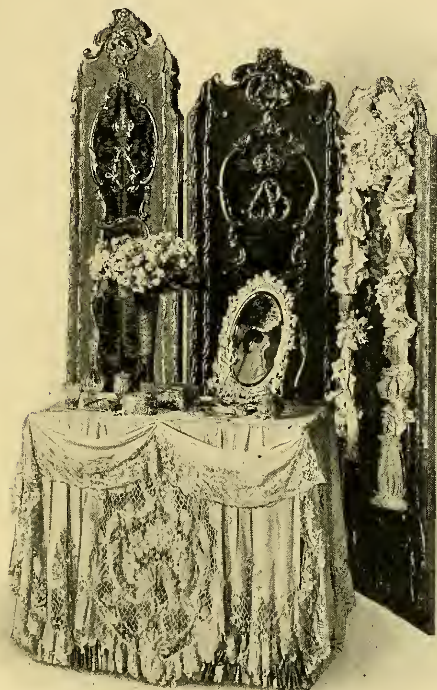
If it had not been for the persistence of Monsieur D'Aiguillon and others who, like himself, were influenced by their own per-

sonal ambition, it is doubtful if Madame Du Barry would have persisted in working to obtain the overthrow of the Duc de Choiseul. The triumph over his sister was enough to satisfy a woman of her light, easy-going nature who had no desire to be dragged from her toilet-table and the matters which were of serious moment to her, to take part in political cabals which she imperfectly understood and for which she cared but little.

At the very outset of her career at Versailles she had diligently paid court to the great minister, to whom she wrote amiably and in the humble tone of one who seeks the friendship and regard of a superior. She interested herself on behalf of his brother, the Comte de Stainville, whom she permitted to secure the reversion of the Governorship of Strasburg, and she even went so far as to ignore the contemptuous attitude of the Duchesse de Grammont and the fierce war of insulting ballads, pamphlets, and epigrams which the Choiseuls, both brother and sister, waged against her. Moreover, she did her best to make the

The Favorite of Royalty.

minister understand that her influence with the king was such as to make her a person-



Screen and toilet table.

age of far greater influence than himself, and she warned him that if he continued

to struggle against her, he must inevitably get the worst of it.

Meanwhile the exiled duchess was travelling through France under pretence of health-seeking, and busying herself with the various parliamentary leaders whom she met on the way. Naturally enough the D'Aiguillon faction took it upon themselves to see that the king was informed in regard to everything that the roving duchess did and said, and although this knowledge made him cool towards the adviser in whose talents he firmly believed, nevertheless he continued to consult him, to work with him, and to invite him to eat and drink with him.

All this having been made known to D'Aiguillon by his faithful pensioner, he redoubled his efforts with the Favorite, and besought her, as she valued her own power at court, to use every art that she possessed to extort from the king the *lettre de cachet* which should send the Duc de Choiseul into ignominious exile.

Never before, perhaps, did the mistress of a Bourbon king work with less zest

A Queen of the Left Hand.

and malevolence for the banishment of a prime minister than did Madame Du Barry for that of Choiseul. She was kept at her work entirely by the persistency of D'Aiguillon, who teased her night and day, trying to interest her in his own ambitions and hates, and seeking by every means in his power to instil into her soft heart and easy-going disposition some of the poison of his own vindictiveness.

Roused at last by the ceaseless promptings of the ambitious D'Aiguillon, and the strong pressure brought to bear on her by everybody who had anything whatever to gain by Choiseul's fall, she began to harass her royal lover, and more than once used her blandishments with such effect that the *lettre de cachet* was actually written at night, only to be torn up in the morning when sober sense banished the fumes of wine from the royal brain. It was not, however, until the arts of political intrigue had been nearly exhausted that the party of the opposition found a mode of attack which compelled the king to the belief that it was necessary for him to take speedy

and definite action. Choiseul had always sought to impress the king with the idea that his highest ambition for France was to keep her at peace with all the rest of the world. Against this impression the opposition skilfully directed their forces of attack by circulating the rumor that the prime minister was really endeavoring to restore his waning prestige by involving his country in war. In proof of this, they declared that he was trifling with the confidence of Spain, and at the same time intriguing against England. The king well knew that a very few weeks before his prime minister had actually placed on the council table the scheme for a descent on England which had been prepared under the direction of Monsieur de Broglie in the year 1766, and had himself brought forward witnesses to assure the king of its practicability.

The confidence of Louis XV in his minister having thus been shaken, Madame Du Barry's turn arrived, and she, availing herself of a favorable moment, told him that if he wished to know the truth in

regard to the negotiations with Spain, he had only to send for the Abbé de la Ville, M. de Choiseul's clerk, who was thoroughly familiar with the whole matter.

Now this Abbé de la Ville had begun life as a Jesuit, and had left that order to become a secular priest. When the great Fénelon went to Holland as ambassador, he accompanied him as the instructor of his children ; but in a very short time his taste for intrigue and diplomacy made him a person of consequence in the eyes of the ambassador, and he became secretary to the embassy, from which post he was subsequently recalled to take the position of chief clerk in the office of Foreign Affairs.

Accustomed as he was to having a voice in all matters, great and small, the Abbé de la Ville had been much chagrined through the Duc de Choiseul's habit of keeping his own counsel, and of writing even the most trivial of despatches in his own hand. The D'Aiguillon faction knew therefore that he could be depended on to support

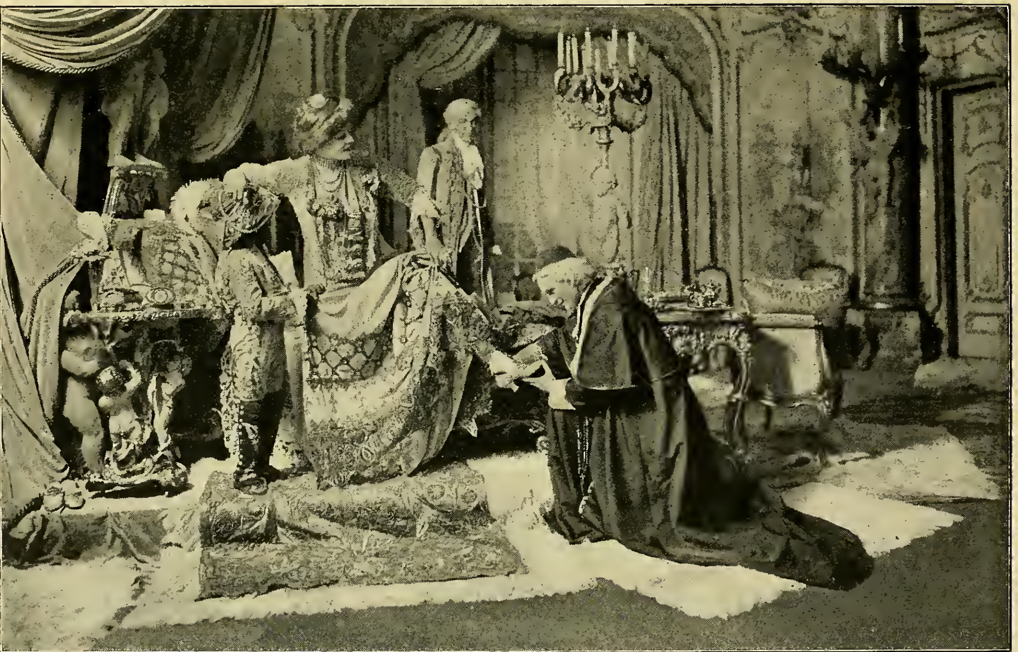
any measure aimed at the downfall of a minister who despised his counsel and his experience, and actually stood in the way of his advancement.

On the 21st of December, 1770, the abbé was summoned with much secrecy to the king's cabinet, and asked, in the presence of Madame Du Barry, what the Duc de Choiseul's intentions were in regard to Spain.

To this he made answer that the despatches of the prime minister had not been shown to him, but that if His Majesty desired to learn for himself what they contained, he had only to order his minister to write a letter to the King of Spain, assuring him of King Louis's desire for peace and determination to avoid war at all costs.

"If Monsieur de Choiseul really desires peace, he will do this at once," said the Abbé de la Ville; "but if he refuses on one pretext or another, it may be taken as evidence that he desires war."

King Louis repaired at once to the Council Chamber, and ordered Monsieur de



Ecclesiastical Homage.

Choiseul to write a letter to the King of Spain assuring him of the peaceful intentions of his royal brother of France. Now the prime minister had, as the D'Aiguillon party well knew, just sent a courier to Spain with a conciliatory letter, and therefore he replied to the king, saying that before writing again it would be best to await an answer to the letter which he had just sent. Thereupon the king arose and left the chamber without another word and in a manner that showed that his anger had been aroused.

Two days later, after signing a state paper, the king threw the pen angrily on the table, instead of giving it back to the Duc de Choiseul, who had handed it to him. This sign of displeasure towards his prime minister was noticed by those present, so that the court was by no means surprised to learn, two days later, of the minister's downfall.

The *lettre de cachet* in the king's handwriting which was delivered by the Duc de la Vrilliere to the minister was couched in the following words :

I order my cousin, the Duc de Choiseul, to place his resignation of the post of Secretary of State in the hands of the Duc de la Vrilliere and to withdraw to Chantellout until there is a fresh order from me. LOUIS.

AT VERSAILLES this 24th of December, 1770.

The victory won, the Favorite showed not the least particle of malice toward the statesman whom she had helped to depose. On the contrary, when the malevolent D'Aiguillon sought to deprive him of his post of Colonel-General of the Swiss Guards without any indemnity, Madame Du Barry used her influence with the king against this scheme, and never rested in her personal solicitations until she had induced her lover to bestow upon the fallen minister a hundred thousand crowns in money and a pension of sixty thousand livres.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAGES OF SIN

HE wages of sin is death," and no man ever received payment for a long life of selfishness, cruelty and sensuality in such hideous coin as that meted out to His Most Christian Majesty, Louis XV of France.

Death came to him in its most terrible form in the spring of 1774, after a series of warnings that had begun more than a year before in a sermon preached in the chapel in Versailles during Holy Week by the Abbé de Beauvais in which he flagellated the iniquities practised at court, and even dared to hint at the turpitudes of the king himself in a Biblical allusion concerning

the sensual indulgence of Solomon. Some weeks later the same young priest, who had now gained the protection of the *religeuse* daughter of the king, Madame Louise, preached a sermon on death which made a profound impression on the worn-out monarch in whose breast remorse was already beginning to assert itself.

In this sermon the courageous and truth-telling young abbé recalled to the king's memory the death of the Duke of Burgundy, of the dauphin and dauphiness, of the queen, of his mistresses — whom he had the grace not to name — in short, of all those who had been nearest and dearest to him; and he gave him to understand that his turn had long since come, and that the Reaper stood waiting, sickle in hand, for his harvest. And the king, listening to these ghastly warnings, reflected with a keen sense of dread that he was at that time in his sixty-third year — a period regarded as one of unusual fatality to men of his mode of life.

The year 1774 came round, bringing with it several happenings that served to

Jeanette and the Cardinal.

upset the equanimity of the sovereign and of the courtesan to whom he clung closer and closer as the months rolled on. Early in the year the Genoese ambassador, whom the king was accustomed to see every day of his life, died suddenly. D'Aimentieres followed him to the grave within a very brief time, and shortly afterwards the Abbé de la Ville, Choiseul's old enemy, on coming to Versailles to thank King Louis for a political appointment which he had given him, was stricken with apoplexy and died under his very eyes. Lastly, his old friend and associate, the Marquis de Chouvlain, fell dead at his feet during a game of picquet.

Zamore.

It was, therefore, with his always superstitious mind filled with all manner of sinister forebodings that the king took his seat in the midst of a brilliant throng of courtiers to hear the last of the Lenten

sermons preached by the same young abbé whose warning voice had awakened in his heart the terrors of death and of the life to come scarcely a year before. From his place in the pulpit this brave young apostle of truth looked down into the royal pew, and, fixing his eyes upon his sovereign, addressed him directly, as was the custom at that time: "Yet forty days, sire, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The king turned pale, and slowly and solemnly the preacher again enunciated the awful menace of the Prophet. Then, growing fervidly eloquent as he developed his subject, he compared Paris to Nineveh, denounced the infidelity of the age, the luxury and wantonness in high places, and urged on all the need of immediate repentance and purer, higher living. Finally, speaking himself with the voice of the real Prophet, he solemnly warned the king and all his wanton court that without repentance on their part "the evil otherwise too surely coming on France could never be averted."

And the king listened with increasing pallor, sick with a nameless terror, as one

who saw in a vision the reign of blood and terror and the gleam of the executioner's knife under which his successors were to pay the penalty for the sins of generations of Bourbons.

It was, therefore, with minds full of dismal forebodings that the king and his mistress entered upon the month of April, 1774, the month in which the Almanac de Liege for that year had already announced that "a great lady who played a rôle at a foreign court would cease to do so."

The king was moody and melancholy in the extreme, and spoke frequently about his sickly state of health, the possibility of death, and — what seemed to disturb him more than all the rest — the frightful account he would have to render to the Supreme Being for the employment of the life which had been given him in this world.

The Favorite, who, like all women of her class, was intensely superstitious, said again and again: "I shall be glad when this nasty month of April has passed," and the king declared that he should not know

an easy moment until after the forty days predicted by the Abbé de Beauvais.

As the days went on, the king's melancholy increased, and his mistress, realizing that it behooved her to drag him from the depths of his despair, lest religious melancholia should take possession of his mind, organized a little pleasure trip to Trianon for the closing days of the month. They reached that charming retreat on the 26th, and on the following day His Majesty complained of headache and severe pains, and was unable to follow the chase on horseback. He returned from the hunt in a carriage, and at once sought repose in the Favorite's apartments, believing that he was suffering from an attack of acute indigestion.

Historians differ as to the origin of the king's malady. The Abbé Badeau relates that on the day of his arrival at Trianon the king noticed a very pretty little girl who was gathering grass for her cow. Coming over to her he lifted up her head-dress and hair, and found that she had very fine eyes, and it occurred to him that she

would look very odd if dressed in the garb of a fine lady. The young girl was accordingly dressed like a lady in court apparel, and her face covered with rouge and patches. In this garb she supped and drank with the king, and the next day fell ill of smallpox and died. Other historians speak of the daughter of the gardener at Trianon and of a young girl who had been brought to the Parc aux Cerfs at the king's desire. The truth is that at that time there was an epidemic of smallpox in the neighborhood, and the king very naturally fell a victim to it.

During the day the king's malady grew worse, and in the night he sent for his principal physician, Lemonier, who found him feverish, but showing no symptoms of a nature to cause uneasiness. The Favorite, dreading more than anything else the awful fear of death which came crowding into the heart of her lover with every attack of illness, urged him to remain at Trianon and allow her to nurse him, without sending word to the royal family. The king consented to this, but, in the mean time, news

of his indisposition reached Versailles, and the dauphin hastened to despatch to his grandfather's aid the surgeon La Martiniere, who he knew exercised a strong influence over the king and who was also an enemy of Du Barry's.

La Martiniere reached Trianon on the 28th of April, and, being a man of strong mind and imperative habits of speech, had no difficulty in prevailing upon the vacillating king to set out at once for Versailles. He himself supervised the preparations for the journey, and under his direction the king was lifted from his couch to a carriage and driven to Versailles, where he was immediately put to bed. The members of his family, including his daughters and the dauphin, came at once to see him ; but after a very brief conversation with each he sent them away for the night, and spent the rest of the evening with Madame Du Barry. The next day the doctors, who were still ignorant of the nature of his malady, prescribed three bleedings, which left the patient in an enfeebled condition, and undoubtedly did much to hasten his death.

The Diversions of Royalty.

The next day, the 30th, one of the doctors, drawing near to the king with a wax candle, discovered on his cheeks and forehead red spots in which pimples were already beginning to form, and knew at once that the disease with which he was afflicted was smallpox. Very much relieved at having actually learned the nature of his complaint, the physicians announced their discovery in tones that were so re-assuring that it was generally believed at court that the king's illness meant only a ten days' confinement to his room. Bourdeau, however, Madame Du Barry's physician, shook his head doubtingly when the news was brought to him, and exclaimed: "Smallpox at sixty-four with a constitution like the king's is a terrible disease!"

And now outside the door of the sick room began a fierce struggle between the two rival parties of the court. The party that rallied about Madame Du Barry made every effort to push into the sick room the woman whom the king loved, in order that the impression might prevail that her influence with him was still paramount.

The anti-Barryites, on the contrary, cried out against the continuance of the scandal, demanded that the sacrament should be administered, and called upon the pious Monsieur de Beaumont to follow the example of the Bishop of Soisons who, thirty years before, when the king was thought to be mortally ill at Metz, drove from his side his then mistress, the Duchesse de Chateauroux.

"Politics makes strange bedfellows," and so it happened that in "this jobbing and this trafficking in the conscience of the king," as the Cardinal de Luymes called it, we find the devotees and the Jesuits banding together to prevent the king from receiving communion, while the Choiseul party of philosophers and sceptics are in league to compel the Archbishop of Paris to administer it.

On the 2d of May, the archbishop arrived from Paris, bringing with him the sacrament, and hesitating between his conscience, which demanded of him the expulsion of the Favorite, and a sense of gratitude for the services which that Favor-

ite had rendered to his party by the overthrow of Choiseul and the elevation of D'Aiguillon. Before the arrival of the archbishop, Richelieu, D'Aiguillon, and Madame Du Barry held a conference in which it was decided to do their best to prevent the administration of the sacrament. The king's daughter, Madame Adelaide, was easily won over to their side by the doctors of the Du Barry party who warned her that to even propose the sacrament might easily give the patient his death blow. Therefore the Duc de Richelieu met the archbishop as he was about to enter the king's ante-chamber, and implored him not to cause the death of their sovereign by what he termed, with characteristic flippancy, a "theological proposition." Then, with the graceful cynicism which so well became him, he offered to make his own confession to the prelate, promising to regale him with such a collection of sins as he had not listened to in many a year. Becoming serious again, he represented to the archbishop that to send away the Favorite was to insure the

triumph of Choiseul, and that to injure the woman who was a friend was also to serve the faction that had always been outspoken in its enmity to the ecclesiastics. As a final argument, he repeated to him what Madame Du Barry had said to him the night before: "Let the archbishop leave us alone, and he shall have a cardinal's hat. I will take care of that, and will answer for it."

The result of the Duc de Richelieu's logical and convincing eloquence was that the archbishop entered the sick room, remained there for about a quarter of an hour, and then went away without speaking about the sacrament. The king was greatly reassured by his silence on the subject of the Eucharist, and demanded that Madame Du Barry should be summoned at once to his presence. When she arrived, he kissed her beautiful arms and hands with a greater degree of pleasure than he had shown toward her since the beginning of his illness.

Disappointed but still undaunted, the Choiseul faction turned to the Cardinal de

la Roche-Aymon, and urged him to propose the sacrament. By this time they had rallied to their support many of the more devout of the clergy, among them the Bishop of Carcassonne, who appealed to the cardinal, in the name of the holy cross, not to allow King Louis to pass out of the world without being anointed, and called upon him to so deport himself in the sick chamber that the king should, before he died, show an example of repentance to his country which he had scandalized.

Louis XV table.

As a result of the great influence thus brought to bear on him, the Archbishop of Paris visited the king on the 3d of May, and there held a long conversation with

him, the result of which was that in the evening when Jeanette Du Barry, whom he had sent for a few hours before, entered his chamber, radiant in the belief that her hold on him was as strong as ever, he beckoned her to his side and whispered: "Madame, I am very sick; I know what I have to do; I do not want to begin over again the scene at Metz, and therefore we must part. Go to Ruel, to Monsieur D'Aiguillon's; and be sure that I shall always feel for you the tenderest friendship."

A moment after she had gone weeping from his presence, he called for her in a voice that showed he was beginning to become delirious. "Ah! she is gone," he said sadly, when he realized that she was no longer in the room. "Then we must go, too — at least we must pray to Saint Genevieve."

The reign of Jeanette Du Barry had ended. And with it had ended, too, the dynasty of left-handed queens of France, which began with Diane de Poictiers, and perished from off the face of the earth

Alone with the King.

when the last of the line was thrust from the royal bedchamber.

But if the end of the Du Barry reign had been commonplace, in what terms shall we characterize the final passing of Louis XV, known to his subjects of half a century before as Louis the Well Beloved, and now stretched upon his gorgeous bed with the hand of death upon him and his mind a prey to the most awful terrors?

Just one week has passed since he turned his back upon his mistress and cried in his extremity for the consolations of the Church. In 1744, when he was ill at Metz, six thousand prayers for his recovery were ordered at Notre Dame by devout subjects. In 1757, at the time of the assault upon his life by Damiens, only six hundred were called for, and now as he lies here at Versailles, with the death agony upon him, only three pious souls have asked that the prayers of the Church be said for him in the great cathedral in Paris.

Torn by the terrors of a reproaching conscience, he has summoned the priests to his bedside, and they have performed their

holy office. But even at the moment of receiving absolution at their hands, he clings to the idea of ruling by divine right, and though the cardinal announces that His Majesty repents of any scandals that his conduct may have occasioned in his kingdom, he qualifies it by adding that the king considers himself responsible for his conduct to God alone.

By nature intensely superstitious, he demands that the clergy shall remain with him in the pestilential sick room from which all save his daughters and a few other devoted souls have long since fled in terror. During the few hours of life that remain to him, he would rather listen to the prayers of the religious faith to which he has turned in his hour of anguish, than permit his mind to dwell on the ignoble life of vice and selfishness, of sins committed, and good undone, that is fast drawing to its pitiful close.

Little as we may envy this Bourbon king the physical sufferings which mark his end, we cannot help feeling that they must be light indeed compared with the agony of

remorse bred by the thoughts that come crowding upon him, despite his efforts to fix his mind on the consolations that religion extends to him. He must remember that "the well-beloved" of fifty years ago has not of late dared to show his face in his own capital for fear of mockery and insult. He must remember what France was in the days of his predecessor, and what she is now, with her peasantry ground down under the heel of the most atrocious political system ever known, her soldiers sent to far-off climes to be butchered in useless warfare, her colonies gone, her prestige vanished, and want, shame, and rebellion stalking her streets. He has often wondered cynically how his uncouth, stupid grandson will contrive to bear up under the kingly crown for which he is predestined. Can he think of him now without a prophetic glimpse of the axe flashing across his troubled vision? Above all else that is passing through his mind, sharper than the stings of conscience, more solemn than the prayers of the Church, ring the awful words of the Prophet as they fell from the lips of the

Abbé Beauvais in the court chapel: "Forty days yet, sire, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The fortieth day has come and is drawing to a close. Already the shadows are deepening in the chamber whose splendors are a mockery to the foul disease that has laid this mighty sovereign low. A candle has been lighted and placed in the embrasure of one of the tall, sumptuously curtained windows that looks out upon a marble courtyard. Hundreds of eyes are watching that candle from without, for it is known throughout the palace that so long as the king lives it will burn.

It is late in the afternoon, and the fortieth day is almost passed, when of a sudden the light in the window of the death chamber is extinguished, and the courtiers come pouring out of the rooms where they have been waiting, and, with a noise that is absolutely like thunder, rush through the corridors and down the great staircases to the chamber in which the new king, Louis XVI, and Marie Antoinette stand waiting for their reign to begin. At the feet of the new sovereign the courtiers make their first

obeisance, then rise and hurry away from the house of death in which the loathsome body of him who was once the hope of France, Louis the Well Beloved, lies unattended, save by a few of the minor clergy and some menial attendants who must pay with their lives for their fidelity.

Late at night the body, attended by a scanty escort, is borne at a quick trot through crowds of contemptuous Parisians who line both sides of the road all the way to the Abbey of St. Denis, where it is hastily thrown into a vault.

It is a dark and awful picture, this final passing of the French king. There is one gleam of tenderness, however, bright with the reflection of past glory, that falls across his bier as it is carried with irreverent haste through the gates of Versailles. A grizzled veteran of the old wars shoulders his musket and brings his hand to salute, as the last honor that he can pay to his dead king. "After all," murmurs the *vieux moustache*, sympathetically, "he was at Fontenoy."

CHAPTER IX

MARIE ANTOINETTE'S REIGN

"THE king is dead! Long live the king!"

"God help and protect us! We are too young to reign!"

Such, we are told, was the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. That the young queen lost no time in carrying out her oft-repeated threat to dismiss the Favorite from court the very moment it should be in her power to do so, is evidenced from the following letter, placed in Madame Du Barry's hands by a messenger the day after the body of Louis XV had been borne at a rapid pace from Versailles to St. Denis, and there thrust, with scant ceremony, into the tomb.

A Loyal Officer.

VERSAILLES, May 12th, 1774.

I hope, madame, that you will not have any doubts as to all the pain I feel at being obliged to announce to you that you are forbidden to appear at court; but I am obliged to carry out the orders of the king, who wishes me to impress on you that his intention is, not to allow you to come there till there is a fresh order made by him. His Majesty, at the same time, is kind enough to permit you to go and see your aunt in the Abbey of Pont-aux-Dames, and I am going, for that reason, to write to the abbess in order that you may not experience any difficulty in the matter. You will be good enough to acknowledge the receipt of this letter through the person who brings it to you, so that I may be able to assure His Majesty of the fact that I have carried out his orders.

I have the honor to be, with respect, madame,

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

DE LA VRILLIERE.

Marie Antoinette's defenders claim that she had nothing to do with the expulsion of Du Barry, and lay great stress on the fact that within comparatively recent years there has been found, in the archives of the Prefecture of Police, an entry which shows that this order was entered there on the

9th of May, 1774, the day before the king's death, and the inference is, supported by certain corroborative testimony, that the king desired to have her put away for a time, because she knew too many state secrets. This is not unlikely, when we consider the absolute indifference of Louis XV to the feelings of every one about him, even of those whom he believed that he loved. His grandson, on the other hand, was of an easy-going disposition, and it is scarcely probably that he would have adopted such harsh measures in regard to a woman who had enjoyed the love and confidence of his grandfather and predecessor. The matter is touched upon, however, in a manner that should dispose of all doubt, in a letter sent by the young queen to her empress mother to announce the death of Louis XV, and in which she says: "The public expected great changes in a moment! The king has limited himself to sending the creature away to a convent, and to driving from the court everything which is connected with that scandal."

There is something almost like a note of

warning in the words uttered by Du Barry herself on receipt of the message which sent her into exile:

"A nice reign indeed, that starts with a *lettre de cachet!*" she exclaimed, with a few choice blasphemies, to the messenger who has brought her the duke's letter. She herself, to do her justice, had never, so far as authentic history asserts, asked for a single *lettre de cachet* during the whole five years of her reign, and this in itself is a circumstance that redounds to the credit of this "unmalignant, not wholly unpitiable thing," as Carlisle has called her, especially when we consider the fact that during the whole period of her reign she was the target for every sort of attack that feminine jealousy, court intrigue, or the political ambition of her enemies could devise. Her predecessor, the Marquise de Pompadour, left a very different record behind her.

The Du Barry coffee cup.

Jean Du Barry, although included in the same order, was too smart to be caught. The instant that he learned of the king's death, he consulted a friend, named Goy, as to what he should do, and this gentleman, who appears to have possessed a high degree of common sense, replied that there was nothing left for him but the jewel case and the post-horses.

"What!" demanded the Roué, with an assumption of dignity, "do you advise me to fly?"

"Well," replied his friend, "you can alter it to the post-horses and the jewel case, if it sounds better."

The Roué took this advice, and in a few hours was well on his way to Germany, which country he reached in safety, thanks to the fact that the period ante-dated that of the telegraph and telephone. Two years later, he returned to Toulouse, married again, and for some time led what must have seemed a very monotonous life to one accustomed to such high intrigues as those that had previously engrossed his attention. It was his boast that, during his sister-in-

law's reign, he had "flung into the pavements of Paris" eighteen million of francs; but that did not prevent him from harassing her constantly for money until the last days of her life.

When Louis XV died, one of the cords — and there were not many of them left, — that had bound the French people to the monarchy snapped in twain. By a curious coincidence, on the same day, and almost at the very moment of his death, news of the passage of the Boston Port Act in the English Parliament was first received in this country. This bill was a measure of retaliation for the Boston Tea Party of the previous December 16th, and by its provisions the port of Boston was to remain closed to ships of all kinds until its inhabitants should reimburse the East Indian Company for the loss of the tea which had gone to flavor the waters of the harbor.

The receipt of the news that the obstinate old English king was still determined to discipline the great lusty colony like a refractory child, was marked by an exhibition of feeling that convinced statesmen

like Adams, Hancock and their peers that a revolution of the thirteen colonies was one of the absolute certainties of the near future.

So it happened that while Louis XVI, with his queen at his elbow, was beginning, with a spiteful *lettre de cachet*, a reign that was destined to end in blood and ignominy, the men who were dominant in the American colonies were beginning to prepare for the great seven years struggle that destiny had marked out for them.

As for Madame Du Barry, her reign having ended with that of the king, she proceeded to the abbey designated in her *lettre de cachet*, and Marie Antoinette began her reign as the lawful queen of France.

If we marvel at the way in which Louis XV and his court went dancing, drinking on toward the deluge that the Pompadour had predicted, we marvel all the more at the way in which his grandson and his lightheaded young queen bore the sceptre of government.

Neither one of them seems to have had any sense whatever of impending disaster,

A Lover's Peril.

though even the old King Louis had often remarked, "When I am gone, I should like very much to know how Berry [the family name for the dauphin, whom he thoroughly despised] will contrive to stand up under it all," meaning the republican element which he himself had found it so difficult to cope with.

It was not merely that they were "too young to reign," they were too ignorant to be intrusted with such an awful responsibility as that of the government of the kingdom of France.

Louis XVI was as much unlike his noble-looking, aristocratic grandfather as it was possible for a man to be. His manners were awkward, his voice harsh and uncultured, his clothing soiled and untidy, and his mind dull, and his will weak and vacillating. His appearance betrayed his habits of gluttony, for he was obese of figure and heavy of feature. When he dined in public, in deference to the ancient French custom which decreed that the inviolable right of the people of France was to see their sovereign eat, he gorged himself to an extent

that proved disgusting to those who had been used to the elegancies of Louis XV and his associates. He devoted himself chiefly to the chase, and to amateur lock-making and map-drawing, and kept a diary which is very interesting reading. The day in which he killed nothing was deemed worse than wasted, and left no record behind it save the single word "Nothing" scrawled in the diary.

So unfavorable was the impression that he created in the minds of his subjects that his advisers deemed it prudent to counteract it by means of the suggestion, artfully circulated, that after all such a simple and frugal king was formed for his whole people rather than for his court alone.

And yet some gleam of the impending axe may have crossed even his dull, uncomprehending brain, for we are told that at his coronation, at the very moment when the crown was placed upon his brow, he raised his hand suddenly to relieve his head for the moment of the weight, and exclaimed petulantly: "It hurts me!"

As to the real character of the young

queen, it is not an easy matter to get at the truth, so fierce has been the abuse of her detractors, so fulsome the panegyrics of her supporters. With the question of her morals, we need not meddle, nor should we lend a too ready ear to the stories that were circulated in regard to her — stories of the kind that always will be circulated so long as women of youth, beauty, and high spirits shall be exposed to the fierce white light of public fame.

That Marie Antoinette proved a far greater calamity to the French people than had Madame Du Barry, is a fact that it would be difficult to gainsay, nor should the circumstance that she was the legitimate queen of France, and not the mere mistress of a dotard king, serve as an excuse for her follies. Born in the purple, and having as a mother the wisest of sovereigns and the most prudent of counsellors, a great deal more might have been expected of her than of a young woman with no inheritance but beauty, a sort of bright native wit, and unfailing good temper, who, transplanted from the shop

counter to a seat which, though unlawful, was none the less secure, on the steps of the throne of France, had plunged into luxuries and extravagances of the sort that have a stronger fascination than anything else in the world for women of her class. She spent millions of the public money, because it was given to her to spend, and she spent it, too, without asking herself whence it came. It was enough for her that she held the envied place of Favorite, and as she was not a lawful queen she could not take upon her own shoulders the responsibilities of the kingdom.

Marie Antoinette, however, came of a class in which governing is as much of a trade as is the profession of cooking in the province of Ticino in Italian Switzerland, from which have come the greatest cooks and *restaurateurs* in the world.

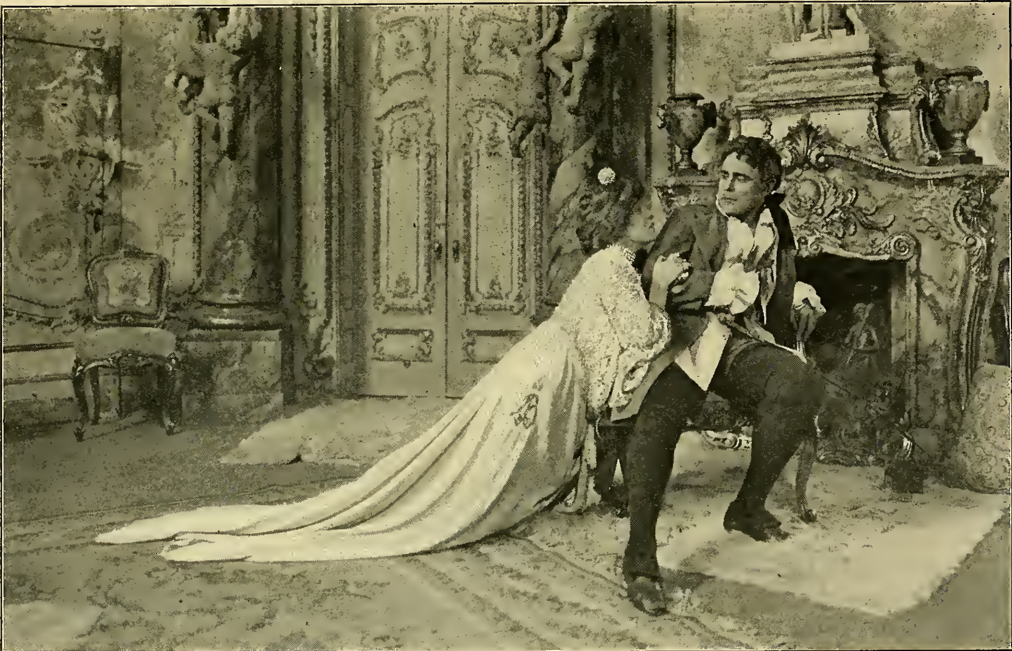
The French people had the same right to the services of their extravagantly paid queen that the hotel-keeper has to those of the high salaried *chef*, nurtured in an atmosphere of sauces, as she had been in that of the Austrian court.

But although a brilliant and beautiful figure in her husband's court, carrying herself with queenly dignity when occasion demanded, and encouraging, by her patronage, the arts of music, painting, and statuary, she was absolutely selfish in her pursuit of her own enjoyment, reckless of the results of her folly, and cruelly vindictive in her treatment of those who, like Du Barry, had incurred her dislike.

History has laid many evil things at the door of the fallen Favorite, and one story, which her enemies never tire of repeating, is to the effect that on one occasion, when her royal lover was greatly exercised over the partition of Poland, she inquired innocently: "Where is Poland?" This anecdote does not do much credit to her education, but after all it was not her business, as the king's mistress, to know anything about Poland. There is something far worse than mere ignorance on the part of one who should have been well informed, in the query of Marie Antoinette, "Why do the people cry for bread, when they can get such nice cakes for a penny?"

Many and interesting are the stories related of the young queen during the early years of her reign, and with many of them we can sympathize; while her impatience of the elaborate ceremonial of court-life, with its ponderous rules and etiquette, as burdensome to her as the enormous coiffure which she was compelled to wear on her head, cannot fail to commend her to us of a simpler, and, we hope, a more sensible age. It is pleasant to read of her mockery of Madame de Noailles, whose duty it was to follow her about and remind her, in low, respectful whispers, of neglected points of etiquette. What more entrancing picture is there than that of this beautiful young queen lying prone on a bed of forest leaves, and laughingly refusing to rise until Madame de Noailles should be summoned to tell her what particular form of etiquette the rules of the French court prescribed for a dauphiness who had been thrown from her donkey.

Moreover Marie Antoinette will be endeared to Americans for all time because of the influence which she used in our



With the Scent of the Violets.

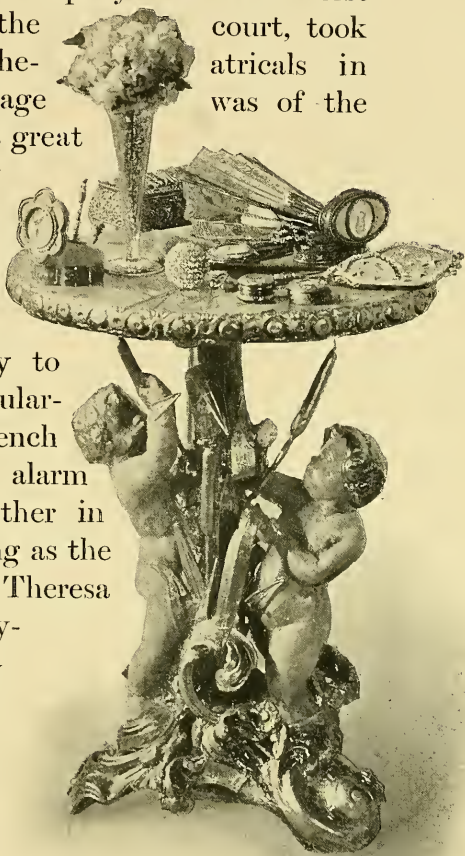
behalf during our struggle with the mother country. She helped to make Benjamin Franklin, then accredited to her husband's court, the rage of Paris, and under the spell of his wit and diplomacy espoused the cause of the colonies with all her heart. This beautiful queen, the chivalrous Marquis de Lafayette, and the American commissioner, who was none the less crafty and adroit because of his Quaker garb and unpowdered locks, did a vast deal to influence public opinion in France, and that, in its turn, brought over the ministry to the American side. The king, however, was very averse to having anything to do with the American disturbance, and even at the moment of signing the treaty with the United States of America, in 1778, said: "You will remember that this is against my better judgment."

That the king viewed the matter rightly from his own point of view was amply proved by subsequent events. For not only did his contributions of men and treasure to the American cause add enormously to the great public debt under

which France was then groaning, but the success of our arms — aided as we were at a most critical moment by the French — served to spread abroad through the kingdom the seeds of democracy. Soldiers returning from America told stories of the new land of liberty which served only to fan the flames of discontent, and it is not too much to say that one of the greatest mistakes of the reign of Louis XVI, so far as the stability of the monarchy was concerned, was his taking part in a costly war which gained for him the undying hatred of England and failed to secure for him the friendship of the new republic.

During the first years of her reign, the young queen remained childless, and devoted herself exclusively to the pursuit of pleasure. In the mornings she received visitors in her bedchamber, as Du Barry had done, and was scarcely less particular than the former Favorite in her manner of exposing her charms to the gaze of her admirers. In the afternoons she amused herself with high play at the card-tables or in the gardens of Little Trianon, and in

the evenings she went to masked balls and late suppers in company with the worst libertines of the court, took part in private theatricals in which the language was of the loosest sort, lost great sums of money at the gaming table, and, in short, lived in such a manner as seriously to weaken her popularity with the French people and to alarm her prudent mother in Vienna. So long as the Empress Maria Theresa lived and Mercy-Argenteau retained the post of Austrian ambassador at the French court, Marie Antoinette re-



Veritable night table actually used by Du Barry at Versailles.

mained to a certain extent under the maternal control, and the correspondence between the sovereign and the diplomat, as well as that of the mother and daughter, afford a marvellously interesting insight into the history of that period.

No less interesting is the picture of court life drawn by Mr. Thomas E. Watson in "The Story of France":

"As Frederick the Great loved Sans Souci, and Washington Mt. Vernon, as Mirabeau would slip away on Sunday to lounge in the rose gardens at Argenteuil, and Napoleon loved to saunter, hands crossed behind him, along the quietudes of Malmaison, — Marie Antoinette sought to create for herself an ideal retreat, an Eden of the fancy, where she was to find true friendship, true happiness, blissful repose. The Little Trianon was a delicious bit of marble architecture built by Louis XV in a retired portion of the park of Versailles. It was here that he had loved to lay aside the trappings and formalities of royalty and play the private gentleman, entertaining a few choice spirits in the little palace, and

amusing himself with amateur farming and flower culture in the lovely grounds.

"Louis XVI gave Little Trianon to his wife, and with the eager delight of a child she set about making it a paradise. The world was ransacked for the finest trees, the choicest shrubs, the loveliest flowers. The rarest skill was employed in laying out gardens, lawns, shrubberies, walks, creating grottoes, hills, lakes and winding rivers. No expense was spared; the queen demanded a fairy-land, and the gardener gave it; the taxpayers footed the bills, and the queen was in ecstasies. The Little Trianon became a gem, a marvel of beauty, which all travellers went to see.

"Brilliant parterres, emerald stretches of velvet lawn, waving masses of luxuriant foliage, glimpses of marble statuary and silvery waters, — all were there to fascinate the eye and kindle enthusiasm. Fountains sprang up in the sun, sparkling and dancing and splashing; the rivulet wound in and out, round and round, through the garden, the lawn, the meadow; the nightingales sang in the shadow of the groves; the

marble Belvidere crowned the steep; and upon the enchanted island which rose from the bosom of the lake rested the Temple of Love. A model rustic village lined the borders of the lake, and there was the mill, the grange, and the manor-house for the master, all complete. The dairy must not be overlooked, that El Dorado dairy where Blanchette, the cow, was milked by the 'daughter of the Cæsars.' The milk vessels were of porcelain, rested upon marble slabs, and conveyed Blanchette's milk to a churn of silver.

"In this Eden the queen lived with a select few of the younger members of the nobility. The king himself was not to come unless invited. Only the few were welcome, — only the congenial, the young, the gallant, the gay. Dull care must not enter here, nor gloom, nor weariness, nor pain.

. . . .

"In the lexicon of the queen's youth, there was no such word as duty. To frolic, to feast, to dress, to outshine the brightest, to dazzle the eye of the be-

Fortiter in Modo.

holder, to create a radiance in her own immediate circle, to laugh, jest, play and enjoy, — was the whole of her gospel. Such was high life all around her. Why should n't she be gay? Let others talk of public distress, prate of economy and preach of woes to come. It was an old song that had been heard now since the good year 1700: 'We must amuse ourselves.' On with the dance; on with festivals and theatricals; on with the horse-races, sleigh-rides, and lawn-parties; on to the opera, the opera-ball and the opera-supper. Let us lose royally at faro, the State pays; let us enrich our pets, the State pays; let us lavish millions upon Little Trianon, the State pays. Let us whisper over the latest scandal, and titter as we do so. Let us skate along the conversational surface as close as we can go to the forbidden ground of the utterly obscene. Let us mock at all things serious, decorous, and coldly prudent! Such was Marie Antoinette before trouble sobered her thoughts, silvered her tresses and struck the light out of her life.

"At Paris, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, you may see a book which speaks but too convincingly of the true character of the unfortunate queen. The cover is that of the Catholic missal, for Marie Antoinette was a devoted Catholic, and she was faithful in her attendance at chapel; but within the sacred cover of this book of worship is enclosed the contents of an obscene novel. The priest could only see the cover, and he would glorify God for so devout a worshipper; but the bowed head of the queen was bent over a filthy love-story, and while the priest talked of God, the queen was reading the history of polite adultery.

"Marie Antoinette should be judged by the standard of her own times, not by that of ours. She should be compared to those around her, not to those around us. Environment is the father of us all — environment and heredity."

In due course of time a daughter was born to the queen, and afterwards, in October, 1781, a son, and the whole nation went wild with delight because their king had an heir. Sir Samuel Romilly, who

happened to be in Paris at this time, was saddened by the sight of the swarms of hungry, ragged, dirty people who danced in the public parks to the music of the royal band to show their delight at the advent of a child who was to be brought up as a common oppressor.

The birth of this child served to restore for the moment the popularity of the young queen, which had waned materially during the half dozen years of her reign, because of her own conduct. Mr. Watson has given us the picture of the rejoicings with which the birth of the little dauphin was celebrated, which is well worth quoting as it shows us Louis XVI and his Austrian queen at the one moment during their reign when they really seemed to be beloved by their subjects.

"People embraced each other in the street, as though the happiness of the event was personal to every citizen of France. Addresses of congratulation poured in from all the departments and public bodies. Illuminations lit up the towns and cities, processions thronged the streets, loyal songs

were sung at the theatres amid deafening applause, Te Deums were chanted in cathedrals, and melodious organs pealed forth their richest notes. All France was glad, deliriously glad. God had given the king a son, and the people would not be left without a royal staff to lean upon. The guilds and trades-unions of Paris were as exuberant in their manifestations of joy as any place-hunter of the court. They spent money freely to make a fitting display at Versailles. Arrayed in the new uniforms of their various organizations and accompanied by bands of music, the mechanics, artificers, and tradesmen of Paris marched out to Versailles and paraded in the court of the palace. Chimney-sweepers, elegantly dressed, carried an ornamented chimney upon the top of which was perched a chimney-sweep of the smallest size. The butchers passed in review bearing a colossal beef. Smiths hammered away upon an anvil; shoemakers made a pretty pair of shoes for the son of the king, and the tailors presented a tiny uniform of the dauphin's regiment. For a long time

The Search for the King's Rival.

Louis XVI, the happy father, who could not say 'my son' too often that blessed day, stood on the balcony viewing the parade, intoxicated by the enthusiasm which prevailed. No happier day was his. King, queen and people were united then, drawn together by the dimpled hand of a child.

"Amid all these rejoicings what spectre pushes its way to the front, marring the universal pleasure? It is the procession of the worshipful coffin-makers, to whom it had not occurred that a hearse or a casket, borne in procession, would not add to the exhilaration of the hour. Old Princess Sophie, the king's aunt, weak of nerves and querulous, thrilled with horror at the sight, and had the worshipful coffin-makers put out of the procession.

"The market-women of Paris came in a body to see the queen, to congratulate her. These women were dressed in black silk gowns, wore diamonds, and had their address inscribed upon the leaves of a fan. The queen received these Dames of the Hall most affably, and the king dined them in the palace. The fish-women also came,

also gained access to the queen, and made three speeches of congratulation, — one to the king, one to the queen, and one to the child. A more fervent spirit of attachment than that which inspired these addresses of the working people of Paris never found expression. Gaze once more upon this scene — the king on the balcony at Versailles, tears of joy in his eyes, his heart overflowing with happiness, and around him the splendid and spontaneous tribute of boundless affection laid at his feet by the laboring classes of Paris. This was October, 1781.

"The outburst of loyalty and affection was not confined to Paris and Versailles. It prevailed throughout the provinces. It was universal and genuine. Songs, dancings, music, festivals, celebrations, did not cease till way into January, 1782."

CHAPTER X

IN RETIREMENT

ISTORY, that is to say authentic history, has very little to say of the fallen Favorite during the years that passed from the moment when Louis XVI began his ill-fated reign with a *lettre de cachet* until that in which she fell a victim to the Reign of Terror.

She remained in the abbey until early in 1775, when she was permitted to regain her liberty. Forbidden to live within ten leagues of Paris, or the court, she purchased the Château of Saint Vrain, situated a few miles from Artajon and consisting of a handsome house, provided with chapel, stables, forecourt, etc., and a domain of

about one hundred and forty acres. This property, which still exists, had belonged to the second son of Madame La Garde, with whom, early in her career, when she was simply little Jeanette Bécu, she had found employment as lady's companion.

Bodyguard of Louis XV.

Here she remained for two years, giving balls and other entertainments, relieving the necessities of the poor, and enjoying as best she could the pleasures of French country life. She also founded two scholarships in a school of art for workmen, which her old friend, M. de Sartines, the ex-chief of Police, had established in Paris. The deed for these scholarships bears the date of September 21, 1775, and on the same day she purchased, for fifty-three thousand francs, a house and thirty acres of land, which she presented to her mother and stepfather, thus enabling

At the Height of her Power.

them to live in comfort for the rest of their days.

Having obtained permission to return to Louveciennes, Madame Du Barry repaired to that house with her great retinue of servants, and there lived for years a life that was almost wholly devoid of exciting incident and was devoted largely to charitable work among her poorer neighbors.

One of her last appearances in the great world in which she had once played her part was on the occasion of the début of the beautiful Mademoiselle Contat, afterwards the Countess de Parny, at the Theatre Français. It was a brilliant audience that gathered in honor of this lovely young debutante. Marie Antionette was there in the royal box in company with her brother, the Emperor of Austria, then journeying under the incognito of Count von Falkenstein. With them, were the Princesse de Lamballe, the Countess de Polignac, the courtly and elegant Baron de Besenval and the Count de Vaudreuil, who shared with the tragedian Le Kain the distinction of possessing the most courtly and gracious manners toward

the fair sex in all France. In boxes adjoining that of the queen, were the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres, in company with the fascinating Mademoiselle de Genlis, whose name the gossips associated with that of the duke, Madame and Mademoiselle de Provence and the Countess d'Artois — and a host of other Parisian exquisites, while the rest of the audience was made up of the leading critics, poets, dramatists and artists of Paris.

By many in the throng that clustered about the royal box the Countess Du Barry was recognized, simply dressed and closely veiled, as she passed along the corridor on the arm of the Duc de Cossé-Brissac. Watchful eyes saw her afterwards, still veiled and hiding behind the thick silk curtains of her box, for she had come from her lovely château, not because she desired to be seen in the gay world, but because of her deep interest in the event of the evening.

Escorted by the duke, Madame Du Barry left the theatre before the conclusion of the play, noticing, perhaps, that she had been recognized by the royal party, and being

fully aware of the queen's antipathy to her. Indeed Marie Antoinette that very evening replied to her brother's question as to the identity of the veiled beauty that she was "that creature," a term which had previously shocked the good sense and taste of Maria Theresa, when she encountered it, as she frequently had, in her daughter's letters.

Concerning this incident, Lady Jackson speaks her mind with her accustomed freedom, and at the same time relates how the Austrian Emperor proceeded to gratify the curiosity which had been awakened in him at the sight of the famous Madame Du Barry, and the buzz of interest and conjecture that had gone round the theatre the moment she was recognized.

"The retired life of 'the creature' at Louveciennes," says Lady Jackson, "naturally provoked comparison with that of 'the creatures' of Versailles, and was not always in favor of the latter. With the Parisian public, the Favorite of the late king was far less unpopular than the new favorites of the queen, while at and around Louveciennes, she was greatly revered and beloved for her

kindness of heart, the interest she took in the poor and her extreme benevolence. She could not, on this occasion, have heard the queen's petulant exclamation or the whispered rebuke of the incognito Emperor.

"On the morrow, however, she was informed that the Counts von Falkenstein and Cobenzel begged permission to pay their respects to the lady of Louveciennes, and to be allowed to walk through the picturesque grounds surrounding the château. Madame Du Barry took much pride in her park and grounds. She was accustomed to walk in them daily — often for hours together. They were charmingly laid out in the English style, and the fine range of greenhouses was filled with the choicest and most beautiful flowers — a luxury then only attainable by the wealthy and great. The pavilion was a perfect museum of objects of art. Joseph and his friend seem to have been greatly interested in them, and generally well pleased with all they saw — not omitting the fair chatelaine herself.

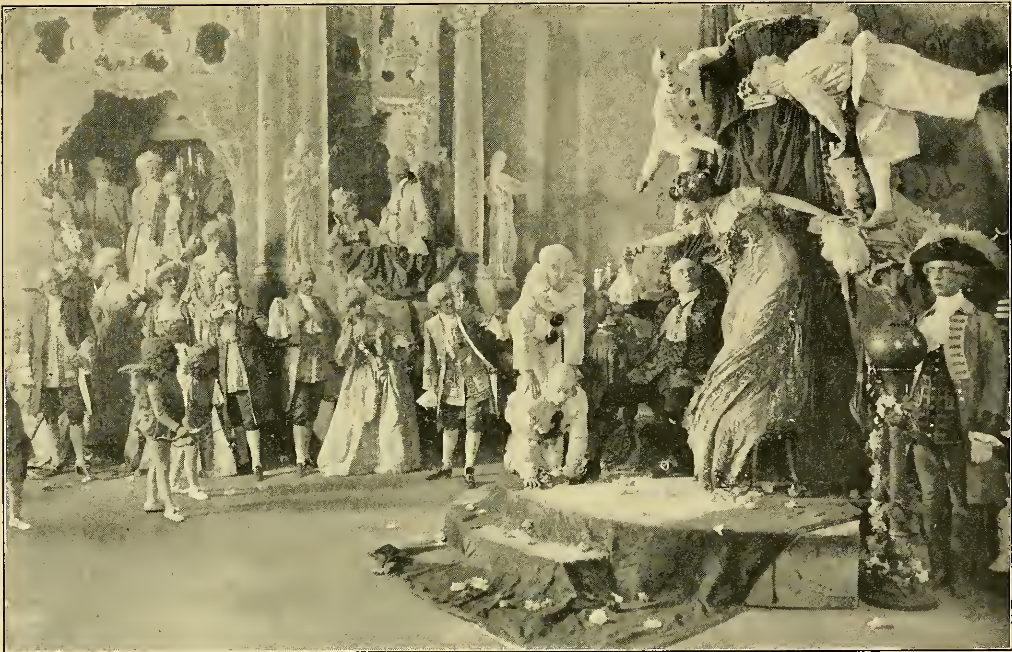
"She was then in her thirty-second year, and still retained, without any tendency to

embonpoint, the youthful grace of her tall, slight, elegant figure. Powder dimmed not the golden tinge of her wavy light brown hair, and no rouge disfigured her face. A strange contrast this must have presented to eyes accustomed to the painted faces of Versailles. She now dressed with great simplicity, but always in excellent taste. Leaning on the arm of her Imperial guest, she conducted him through those fine avenues of lofty forest trees for which her domain was famous, and to those sites whence the finest prospects were obtained. And when, after spending with her the greater part of the day in admiring the beauties of nature and art, in both of which Louveciennes was so rich, Joseph took his leave, he replied to her thanks for the honor of his visit to a poor recluse: 'Madame, beauty is everywhere a queen; and it is I who am honored by your receiving my visit.'

"Cynical as he was, and sometimes very offensive, yet the Emperor Joseph, when he pleased, could make very gallant speeches and pay very flattering com-

pliments. Nowhere does he seem to have shown to so much disadvantage as at Versailles, for all he beheld there was out of harmony with his ideas of what ought to have been. He had a strong presentiment of evil looming in the future for France, and that the gloomy horizon was fraught with danger both to her inert sovereign and his thoughtless queen."

Another event which drew Madame Du Barry from her retirement was the return of Voltaire to France, and his apotheosis at the Theatre Français. The ostensible object of the philosopher's visit to Paris was to rehearse the actors who were to play his new tragedy, "Irene," and for a time it seemed doubtful whether this great Frenchman would be allowed to return to Paris after his years of exile. The clergy were almost unanimous in urging the king to forbid his return. But on the other hand all Paris was aroused at the thought of welcoming once more the great dramatic poet, philosopher and enemy of shams, who was anxious to undertake this long and arduous winter journey in order that he



A Kingly Revel.

might see once more the city that he loved so well.

Worn out by the fatigue of his long journey and the excitement and annoyance of constant rehearsals, the venerable dramatist was unable to take part in the glories of the first representation, accounts of the progress of which were carried to his bedside, from time to time, during the evening. It was for this performance, and with a view of meeting Voltaire once more, that Madame Du Barry came up to Paris from Louveciennes, and it was at this time that she met again, and for the last time, the Duc de Richelieu, and for the first time Benjamin Franklin, who had brought his grandson with him to obtain the philosopher's benediction.

"Kneel, my son," said the famous American, "kneel before the great man!"

The youth obeyed, and Voltaire, laying his hand on his head, said in English, "God and Liberty!"

Voltaire was able to attend the sixth representation of his play, but only after having been nerved for the occasion by

strong stimulants. He was carried from the theatre to his home in an almost senseless condition, and a few days later was dead.

The winter of 1783 did much to hasten the downfall of the monarchy. It was a period of unheard-of severity, memorable above all preceding winters for its seventy-six days of intense cold. In the splendid abodes of the rich, where there was but little provision for warmth, it was found necessary to hang carpets and tapestries over the huge doors and windows, and to keep the chimney-places filled, night and day, with blazing logs, whose heat, however, was more seen than felt, as it disappeared up the enormous chimneys. But in the squalid streets of old Paris, where the poor dwelt, the poverty was more bitter and the spirit of discontent fiercer than ever before. It was a difficult matter for the police to keep the people in check and prevent them from satisfying their own hunger from the abundance so freely displayed by the wasteful and selfish nobility. In the public squares, small doles of black

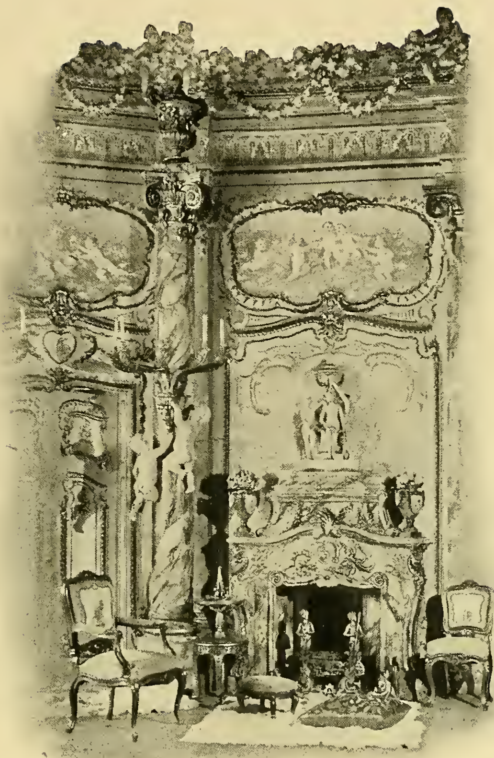
bread were distributed to the hungry, many of whom were also employed for a few sous a day in the work of removing the snow from the entrances to the great palaces and hotels of the nobility and modelling it into huge, uncouth statues, presumably of the king and queen. The object of this was to raise the cry of "Vive le Roi!" and with it "Vive la Reine!" But as a general thing, the cry of "A bas l'Autrichienne" made itself heard high above the perfunctory clamor of the poor wretches who were trying to hold their jobs by a display of patriotism. So often, indeed, was this cry heard and so bitter was its tone, that when Marie Antoinette wished to enjoy herself again with her sledges, it was deemed expedient to prevent it, for fear the sight of such luxury should prove an irritation to the suffering people.

At this time, too, the French soldiers returning from their term of service in America, full of enthusiasm for the cause for which they had been fighting side by side with the Colonists, urged upon their countrymen the expediency of obtaining for

themselves what the Americans, with their aid, had procured by their long war of revolution. These returned soldiers were justly proud of their achievements in our War of Independence, in whose benefits they could have no part. But they naturally expected that their valor in serving their king would stand them in good stead at home. They found, however, that General Count Sagur, whom the queen had made minister of war, had issued orders making it impossible for any but noblemen to reach the grade of officer in the army. The war being over, a great many promotions were made, but not in the way of rewards to men who had rendered service to their country.

The only question asked of a candidate was, " Have you four quarterings ? " If he had not, nothing could enable him to rise from the ranks.

It is worth remarking that in the middle of this very winter, young Napoleon Bonaparte, then in his fifteenth year and a student at the military college of Brienne, divided his schoolmates into two armies,



A corner of Du Barry's bedchamber in the palace at Versailles.

directed them in the construction of a snow fortress, and himself led the attacking party. For ammunition, they had snow-

balls hard as ice, and in some cases, weighted with stones. And history declares that not until the fortress was entirely demolished did its defenders surrender to the future Emperor of France.

There were many in the court circle at this time who recalled with feelings of dire apprehension the extraordinary prediction once made in the salon of Madame de Coigny by that charming epigramist and poet, Cazotte, who, at that time, divided with Cagliostro and Mesmer the honors of clairvoyance. Cazotte was a man of dreamy religious sentiment, highly imaginative and a mystic. He did not pretend to make diamonds and gold, to heal the sick, or give public exhibitions of science combined with quackery, as his rivals did, but occasionally he went into a trance, and it was then that he was supposed to be endowed with second sight.

It was on one of these occasions that he simply heaved a deep sigh and gave no answer to the question of two or three ladies of the court circle who demanded eagerly the nature of his vision.

The Clown's Gambol.

"Speak, Cazotte!" cried the ladies. "Tell us what you see!"

"Do not ask me. It is too sad!"

"You must tell us what it is," persisted the ladies, as they gathered about him.

"Fearful things are coming on France, coming upon you all — even upon you who speak to me," he replied at last in tones of a half-conscious person.

"But what is it that you see?" they demanded.

"I see a prison," said Cazotte, shuddering, "a cart, a large open place, a strange kind of machine resembling a scaffold, and the public executioner standing near it."

"And these things — the scaffold and the executioner are for me?" asked Madame de Montmorency.

"For you, madame," replied the seer.

"Do you see me there, Cazotte?" asked Madame de Chabot, laughingly.

"I see you there," he said.

"You are mad to-night, Cazotte," cried Madame de Chevreuse, "or you are trying to frighten us."

"Would to Heaven, for your sake, madame, that I were," he exclaimed.

"You say you see a cart; is it not a carriage, Cazotte?" inquired Madame de Montmorency.

"It is a cart," he answers. "To none, after the king, will the favor of a carriage be allowed."

"To the king!" exclaimed several of the company who had not hitherto joined in questioning the dreamer. "To the king?" demanded Madame du Polignac, addressing herself directly to Cazotte.

"To the king," he muttered, despondingly.

"But the queen, — myself?" she asked eagerly.

"The queen, too, is there. Madame de Polignac stands in the distance and a mist envelops her," was his reply.

"And yourself, Cazotte?"

"As regards myself," he answered sadly, "I am as the man who for three days went round the City of Jerusalem, crying aloud, 'Woe! Woe!' to the inhabitants thereof, but who on the fourth day cried 'Woe!

Woe!' unto himself—'woe is me!' A stone from a sling was aimed at him, struck him on his temple and he died."

Cazotte was guillotined in 1792. The rest of his predestined victims perished at about the same time, though Madame de Polignac lived until the following year and died in December, at Vienna, a place of safe distance, that was perhaps signified by the mist in which Cazotte saw her enveloped.

CHAPTER XI

THE STORM BREAKS

OR more than fifteen years Jeanette Du Barry had lived quietly on her beautiful estate Louveciennes, keeping up a few of her old court intimacies, receiving visits now and then from foreign princes and other distinguished travellers, and enjoying a calm, happy life in which there was neither intrigue nor agitation nor danger of dismissal and disgrace. Her affairs were prosperous, her debts settled, and she was able to live handsomely and have money to spare for her friends and for charity. She was greatly beloved by the poor and sick of the neighborhood whom she visited and aided, and there was

no one in the town who had not a kind word for the ex-Favorite of Louis XV.

Undoubtedly these years of exile were the happiest in her whole life, and well they might have been, for through them all she was sustained and cheered by the devoted love of Cossé-Brissac.

As years rolled on travellers ceased to visit her, her name dropped out of the public prints, and finally she came to be forgotten of all the world save the little one of her immediate vicinage. Her sympathies were still with the royal family, and she was outspoken in her denunciations of the revolutionary party, which was gaining in strength every hour, for the indignities which it sought to heap upon the heads of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The deluge long since predicted by the Marquise de Pompadour was underway at last, and the axe that may have disturbed the visions of Louis XV, that certainly gleamed through the prophetic warning of Damiens — "the shabby man with the penknife" who was so far ahead of his time — the axe that the actress sees in

the very first act of the drama has become a stern reality now. The days are beginning to be busy ones for the executioner, and those who value their heads are hastening to declare their friendship for the nation and their hatred of royalty and aristocracy.

So completely forgotten was the woman who had played such a conspicuous part at the court of the king that up to the beginning of the year 1791 no attention was paid to her by the aggressive patriots of the revolutionary party nor had her name been dragged into the papers or political discussions for many years, save once when some demagogue declared that the National Assembly cost but a quarter of the sum that Louis XV squandered on the woman whom he himself had seen covered with diamonds and giving away basketfuls of louis d'or to her relatives.

In all probability the black storm which was now gathering over France might have broken and spent its terrific force without making itself felt in the little château where this still beautiful survivor of the

A Woman's Intercession.

court of Louis XV was living out her days peacefully and secure in the good will of all around her, had it not been for a comparatively unimportant happening which served to alter the whole course of her life.

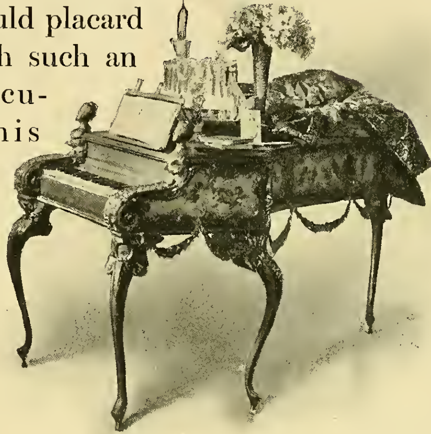
On the night of January 10, 1791, during the absence of Madame Du Barry, who was visiting the family of Brissac in Paris, the château was opened by robbers and a vast number of diamonds and other precious stones were stolen. In her endeavors to recover her property, she took into her confidence the jeweller Rouen, and he, in an ill-considered moment, caused the dead walls of Paris to be placarded with a long list of the precious stones, described in detail under the words "Two Thousand Louis To Gain."

This happened at a moment when hunger, cold and misery, combined with the insidious oratory of demagogues and the inspiring words of patriots, were leading the people at a rapid pace toward anarchy — Nature's primitive remedy for all social ills. These placards were displayed

before the eyes of men and women who were suffering for want of the bare necessities of life. Being without occupation they could find time to read and talk over among themselves the great list of diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, rubies and pearls. And as they read, and wondered how one human being could be so fortunate as to possess all this wealth while they went naked and hungry, they remembered who and what this almost forgotten woman had been. They had heard, perhaps, in an exaggerated form, of the way in which kings were wont to cover the bodies of their favorite women with diamonds while the peasantry perished of hunger and cold. They had heard vaguely of luxury in high places, of the wastefulness in Versailles, while the poor were clamoring for bread at the very palace gates. They had heard all these things from the lips of their orators, half believing perhaps and wholly uncomprehending the significance of it all.

Now, all at once, there was flashed into the wan faces of these desperate ones a list of the very jewels that had gone to deck

the body of their king's courtesan at the time when they themselves perhaps had seen their loved ones sicken before their eyes and perish for lack of food. The mere fact that a man of affairs like Rouen should placard the streets with such an incendiary document as this without ever thinking of what it might provoke, indicates how little even the intelligent part of the French people knew of the dangers that threatened. This, too, at a time when the Revolution had actually begun.



Spinnet of the period.

About the middle of February of the same year five men entered the shop of M. Simon, the rich London lapidary, and offered to sell him a quantity of precious

stones for which they asked only about one-sixth of their actual value. The lapidary purchased them for fifteen hundred pounds, and on learning from the men that they had others of still greater value to dispose of, promised to take them also, and then quietly notified the authorities. The men were arrested that night, and although they contrived to destroy one or two of the larger gems by throwing them into the fire, the bulk of their booty was recovered and word sent to the Countess Du Barry.

Overjoyed at the news, she left at once for London, saw the jewels and identified them, declaring under oath that they belonged to her. Unfortunately other legal proceedings were necessary before the gems could be turned over to her and she was obliged to return to France, after leaving them deposited with her bankers, sealed with her own and their seal.

On the 4th of April she started again, taking with her this time the jeweller, Rouen, and remaining until the 21st of May, when she returned again without her property. A third journey followed

from which she returned late in August, feeling much cast down and disappointed over the tediousness of English law processes. After Madame Du Barry's return to France the National High Court entered upon its functions at Orleans and the new method of beheading prisoners by the guillotine was adopted. It is said that a model of this machine fell under the eyes of Louis XVI at the time that it was under legislative consideration, and he, being an expert amateur machinist, suggested an improvement which was actually utilized by the inventor and is still in use in the machine that is used in France at the present day.

Things were marching briskly now and the work of the executioner was growing heavier every day. Lafayette, who, since his return from America, had been a dominant figure in the changing fortunes of his country, was compelled to leave France and fell into the hands of the Austrians, who kept him in prison until years afterwards when Napoleon Bonaparte demanded his release. The king and royal family

were made prisoners and, what was of far greater concern to Madame Du Barry, her devoted lover, Cossé-Brissac, who had been removed from his command of the king's military establishment, was beheaded, together with hundreds of other prisoners in the September massacres. His head was carried to Louveciennes and thrown through the window of the room in which Madame Du Barry was seated.

In October of the year following, Madame Du Barry started once more for London from which she returned in March, 1793. During this, as well as other visits to England, she received attentions from the hands of many of the most noted men in the kingdom, and as it afterwards transpired, her movements were carefully watched and noted by spies in the employ of her enemies at home. During her last visit the Revolution had gained terrific headway, the king and queen had perished on the scaffold, and William Pitt, whom she saw a number of times and who gave her a medal that had been struck in his honor, urged her to remain in England, knowing

With Breaking Heart.

perfectly well the risk that she ran in returning to a country that was inflamed against the old monarchy and everything connected with it.

Madame Du Barry, however, had full confidence in the protection that would be afforded her in Louveciennes, which she had left but a short time before a peaceful community, undisturbed by the storms that were shaking the country to its foundations, and inhabited by people who were one and all grateful to her for what she had done for them.

During her absence, however, a man named George Greive, who claimed citizenship in the United States of America, and described himself as "factionist and anarchist of the first rank and disorganizer of despotism in both hemispheres," had settled in the village and impregnated its inhabitants with the doctrines which he preached. This demagogue was a friend of Marat and was actually to have dined with him on the day that Charlotte Corday rid the world of his presence. Marat always hated Du Barry, and it is more than likely that he suggested

her to Greive as one whom it would be easy to destroy and whose wealth was sufficient to yield something to the instrument of her destruction.

Through the exertions of this patriot, who at Marat's suggestion had lost no time in domiciling himself in Louveciennes, the villagers were persuaded that Madame Du Barry had really turned *emigrée*, and had settled in England without any intention of returning to her own country. Imbued with this belief, seals were set on the doors of her château as a preliminary step to confiscation. But the sudden appearance of the owner put a stop to this work, and the mayor of the town was easily induced to remove the seals. Undismayed by the failure of this plot, and knowing Du Barry's popularity among the villagers, Greive's next attempt took the form of an address to the authorities of the Department of the Seine et Oise, in which, backed by the signatures of thirty-six citizens of the village, he complained of the presence there of many aristocrats and suspected persons. On the strength of this address, Madame Du Barry

was placed under arrest in her own house, and, after official inquiry, was set at liberty again, the authorities of the Seine et Oise showing no disposition to deal harshly with her. One of its members, indeed, Lavallery by name, is said to have shown a decided partiality for this still handsome and attractive woman of fifty.

Had Madame Du Barry procured her passports and repaired to England the moment she was released, she would undoubtedly have enjoyed a much longer life than she did. Unfortunately for herself, she chose to remain in her château, trusting to the integrity of her respectable neighbors, and fearing that if she did leave the country, her house, with all its exquisite furniture and works of art, would be confiscated by the republicans. It may have been that another lover engrossed her attention at that time — it seems that she was never at a loss for a sweetheart — but certain it is that she chose to remain and she paid dearly for the mistake.

Early in September, 1793, Greive began again his denunciations of her, and on the

22d of that month she was arrested and lodged in the prison of Sainte Pelagie, while seals were placed upon the doors of her château. Madame Roland was incarcerated there at this time, and it has been said that the widow of the recently guillotined General Beauharnais, afterwards Empress of France, was arrested on the same day.

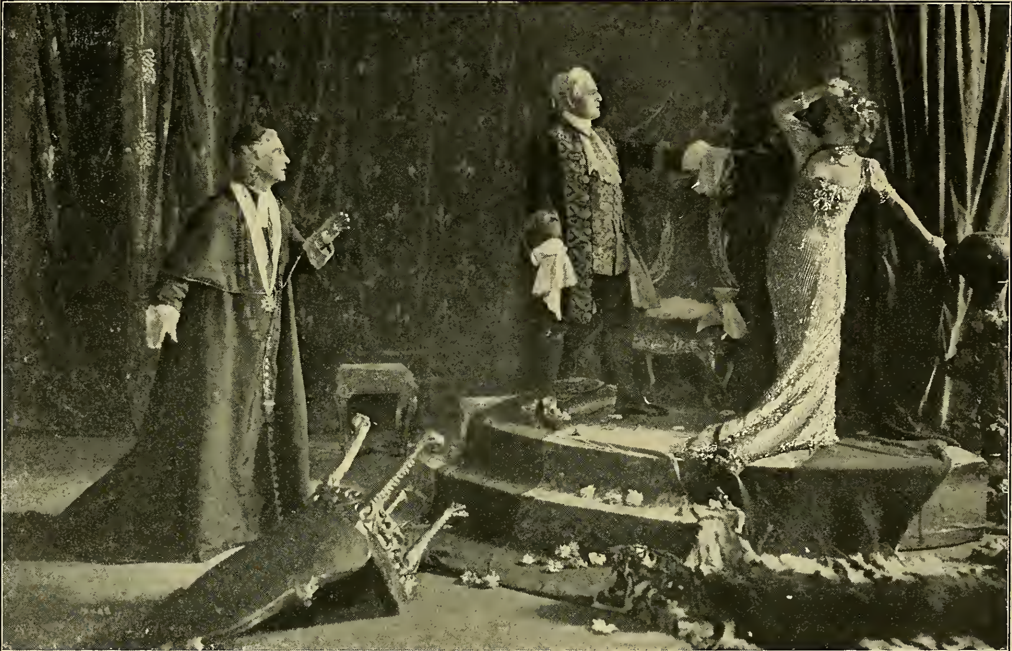
There is a story told of the ex-Favorite during her imprisonment which, although characteristic of her in many ways, can hardly be reconciled with her conduct a short time later, when brought face to face with death on the scaffold. An Irish priest, who had contrived to obtain access to her in her cell, offered to save her if she could supply him with a certain sum of money with which to bribe the jailers. She asked him if it would be possible to save two women, and on learning that it would not, she gave him an order on her bankers for the necessary sum, and bade him save the Duchesse de Mortemart, who was at that time lying concealed in a loft in Calais. The priest, having urged her in vain to

permit him to save her instead of her friend, took the order, and with the money which he obtained on it, went to Calais and rescued the duchess from her attic retreat. Then taking her by the arm, he set out on foot, explaining to all who noticed his clerical garb, that he was a good constitutional priest and as such had married the woman. In this way he managed to pass through the French lines to Ostend, where he embarked for England, taking with him the duchess, who, in after years, related the whole story to Dutens, the author of "Memoirs of a Traveller taking a Rest," in which entertaining volume it is chronicled.

CHAPTER XII

DREYFUS-LIKE JUSTICE

HE methods employed in the trial of Madame Du Barry would seem incomprehensible to American readers, were it not for the fact that the Dreyfus trial, conducted on similar lines a very few years ago, served to familiarize us with the manner in which French tribunals administer the Gallic equivalent of justice. We all remember the important testimony offered by the different French officers, who knew that Dreyfus was guilty, "because it could not be otherwise," and the weighty evidence of those who made a profound impression on the court by declaring that the prisoner was certainly guilty, "because if he was not, who was?" We can also recall the pub-



A Jealous King.

lished accounts of the execrations hurled by the populace at those who endeavored to stem the fierce tide of racial hatred evoked by the trial, and of the applause which greeted that "hero of the hour," who was shown to have taken away the captive's writing paper and ink.

For the name Dreyfus, substitute that of Jeanette Du Barry, go back a little more than a century in time, and not a single degree in civilization or mercy, and we have the trial of the last of the race of queens of the left hand that France has ever known.

She was accused of conspiring against the French Republic and favoring the success of English arms; of wearing mourning for the late king; of having in her possession a medal of Pitt, the English statesman; of having buried at Louveciennes the letters of nobility of an *emigré*, and also the busts of persons prominent at the court of her royal lover; and of having wasted the public money by her extravagance.

The first witness against her was Greive, who testified that he had found near her

house a quantity of precious stones, together with portraits of Louis XV, Anne of Austria, and the Regent, and a medal bearing the likeness of Pitt. He also testified that an English spy named Forth made frequent journeys between Louveciennes and London, ostensibly on business connected with the diamond robbery, and that the general opinion of the villagers was that the robbery was nothing but a pretence.

A man named Blache swore that Madame Du Barry wore mourning for Louis XVI when she was in London, and one of her discharged servants, Salanave, declared that his dismissal from the household was due to the fact that he was a patriot, whereas all the other servants sympathized with the aristocracy.

Then Zamore, the black dwarf, who owed everything that he possessed to the favor of his mistress, swore that most of her guests were not patriots, and that he himself had heard them rejoice over the defeats of the armies of the Republic. He declared that he had frequently rebuked Madame Du Barry for associating with aristocrats and

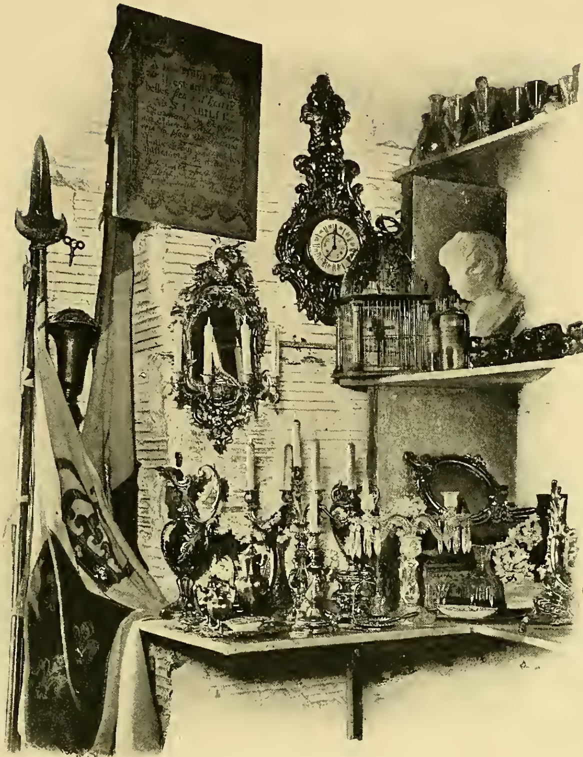
that he was positive that there had been no actual robbery of jewels.

These were the most important witnesses for the prosecution. There were also a surgeon named Augustin Devrey, who testified that he had "once heard the Widow Collet say that some time after the arrest of Brissac, Du Barry spent the night in destroying papers;" and one Claude Reda, a fencing master, who gravely declared that he "had heard it said that when Du Barry was in London she saw the Colonnes."

Certainly there is a Dreyfus-like ring, as well as a suggestion of the mental capacity of the jury, in these passages taken from the speech of Fouquier-Tinville for the prosecution: "You have judged the conspiracy of the wife of the last tyrant of the French, and you have at this moment to judge the plots of the courtesan of his infamous predecessor. You have to decide if this Messalina — born amongst the people, enriched by the spoils of the people and who, by the death of the tyrant, fell from the rank in which crime alone had

placed her — has conspired against the liberty and sovereignty of the people; if, after being the accomplice and the instrument of the libertinage of kings, she has become the agent of the conspiracies of tyrants, nobles, and priests against the French Republic. You know what light the evidence of the witnesses and the documents have thrown upon this plot! It is for you, in your wisdom, to weigh the evidence. You see that royalists, federalists, all these factions, though divided amongst themselves in appearance, have the same centre, the same object, the same end.

"The war, abroad or in La Vendee, the troubles in the South, the insurrections in Calvaldos — all march under the orders of Pitt, but now the veil which covered so much wickedness has been rent in twain and nothing remains of the conspirators but shame and the punishment of their infamous plots. Yes, Frenchmen, we swear that the traitors shall perish and liberty alone shall endure! In striking with the sword of the law a *conspiratrice*,



A corner of the property room.

a Messalina guilty of plotting against the country, you not only avenge the Republic, but you uproot a public scandal, and you strengthen the rule of that mo-

rality which is the chief base of the liberty of the people."

With Madame Du Barry were tried also the three Vandenyvers, members of the firm of Dutch bankers with whom she kept her account. The chief charge against these men was that they had furnished the accused woman with money in the shape of letters of credit to be used by her during her visit to London. According to their own admission, they furnished letters of credit to Madame Du Barry "because she had established the fact and satisfied them as to her having passports, and, not being judges of their validity, thought there was nothing in supplying her with the sums she demanded."

There was not a particle of evidence of any sort of crime on the part of these financiers. The principal figure in the trial was known to be a woman of loose morals, upon whom had been squandered millions of the public money, and it was not unnatural that the vengeance of a long suffering and now bloodthirsty people should fall upon her head. For the murder of

In the Garden of Louveciennes.

the Vandenyvers, however, there was not one shadow of an excuse.

No witnesses were called for the defence. Nor is this fact likely to prove a surprise to any one familiar with the proceedings in the Dreyfus case, or with certain still more recent happenings in New York. We all know how it fared with Zola because of his championship of the weak against the strong, and such of us as live in New York, believe that if there is one thing more unlucky than walking under a ladder, it is giving testimony in the courts against a police detective.

That the jury had some qualms of conscience about this blood-letting is indicated by the fact that it deliberated for an hour and a quarter, which is one quarter of an hour more than was given to the consideration of the case of Marie Antoinette. At the end of that time it returned a verdict of guilty on every count in the indictment, and, Fouquier-Tinville having demanded the "application of the law," all four prisoners were sentenced to suffer death within the space of twelve hours.

But Madame Du Barry, hoping to gain time and perhaps mercy, sent for Denisot, one of her judges, Claude Rougere, the Deputy Public Accuser, and Tavernier, a *greffier*, and to them made a confession or declaration in regard to her concealed property. To these men she gave a list of about two hundred and fifty articles of jewelry and gold and silver plate which, together with several sacks of money, she had buried in different parts of her garden. In her terror, and perhaps without a thought of what she was doing, she did not hesitate to implicate in her confession those who had helped her in her work of concealment, some of whom paid with their lives the penalty of their devotion to her. She firmly believed that if she gave up everything her life would be spared. But no sooner was the confession ended than orders were given for her execution on the following day.

In the memoirs of the de Goncours we find this striking picture of the last of the favorites during the few hours that immediately preceded her death :

"At the reading of this sentence, prostrated, overwhelmed by stupor and horror, Madame Du Barry suddenly lost the coolness and the remnant of dignity which she had exhibited during the trial. When she saw that all was over, that she was about to be led away and that the witnesses who had been present during the scene rubbed their hands and enjoyed her agony shamelessly, she was stricken with such a physical weakness that the gendarmes were obliged to support her with their arms, while the fear that she would die before reaching the scaffold took possession of the anxious multitude.

"The trouble, the fright, the utter helplessness, the prostration of the woman in the presence of death — and of such a death — was so great that she, who all her life had thought only of living, in one moment forgot everything, affection, gratitude, debts of love, sacred engagements, the secrets and the devotion of those who had compromised themselves for her. Hoping to save her life by selling the lives of others, believing that she could buy pardon, or at

least a reprieve by giving up what remained of hidden treasure, we find her on the day of her execution at ten o'clock in the morning, quite pale after a night of terror, trembling and supplicating between the two wickets of the Conciergerie, flinging toward the advancing executioner, toward the hour of doom so nigh, toward the guillotine looming about her, the precipitate and breathless confession of everything that she had buried, concealed and kept back from the scent of the Republic and from the cupidities of the year II! To Justice Denisot, to Claude Rougere, substitute of the public prosecutor, Madame Du Barry gives detail as to the precious objects buried in the garden of Louveciennes, buried in the thickets, concealed in the corridors and in the cellar, in the garden of her valet, that faithful Morin who will afterwards pay with his head for his mistress's disclosure, concealed in the house of the woman Deliant, concealed on the premises of Citizen Montrouy.

"Under the stroke of terror, she remembers and finds everything again, bit by bit,

louis by louis, down to a plate, down to a spoon, for it is her life that she is going to recover. In her zeal, in her anguish, fearing that all this treasure will not suffice still to pay for her pardon, she undertakes to write to London, if it is the good pleasure of the Tribunal, to get back all the articles in the theft of 1791 deposited with Morland, with Moncelet and with Ramson. Unhappy being! She forgot that the Revolution would be her heir."

Jeanette Du Barry met death in a way that even moved the blood-thirsty onlookers to something like pity. It was a time when the knife was for women as well as men and when courage at the supreme moment of death was not a matter of sex. Marie Antoinette, Madame Roland, Charlotte Corday and scores of others mounted the scaffold with faces that were calm and often smiling, and died without giving sign of fear. These women died for some principle in which they believed. Poor Du Barry, however, died only because of her beauty, which had turned the head of a king. And with that beauty faded, her royal lover

dead and gone, as well as the old order of things for which he stood, she had nothing to sustain her in her final hour.

Crouching in the cart, and with a face as white as the robe she wore, she passed through the great crowd that had assembled to look upon the mistress of its former king. With her were the Vandenyvers and they sought to sustain her with words of cheer and encouragement. Her only replies, however, were sobs and moans and inarticulate cries for mercy. Greive, the anarchist, was there among the rest, laughing heartily, as he afterwards said, at the grimaces of the unfortunate woman whom he had hounded to the scaffold. The cart entered the rue St. Honoré and passed directly in front of Labille's shop, where, a quarter of a century before, she had learned her trade of bonnet-making. A score of girls, employed there now just as she had been in her young days, had stationed themselves on the balcony to obtain a glimpse of this world-famous beauty who had once been an apprentice herself in that very shop, had lived to rule her king and to make and unmake cabinets,

Condemned to Die.

and was now to crown her whole marvellous career with a single moment of anguish on the block.

At the sight of these girls looking down upon her with pitying eyes, the condemned woman seemed to awake to a sudden and hideous realization of what was before her, and shriek after shriek rang through the crowded street. The executioner and his assistants used all their force in their efforts to prevent her from throwing herself to the ground. Foiled in this desire, she leant over the edge of the cart and frantically begged for her life.

"My friends, save me! I have never done harm to any one in my life! In Heaven's name, save me!"

It was almost the first time that the spectacle of a woman dying in abject terror, and without even a show of bravado, had been seen in Paris, and something like a murmur of pity began to make itself heard.

"Life! Life! Give me my life, good people, and all my goods shall be yours!" she implored.

"Your goods! Bah! They all belong

to the nation already!" cried a man contemptuously, and a coalheaver standing in front of him turned and levelled him to the earth with a single blow in the face.

The people approved the act. The pitying murmurs grew louder, and if the driver had not urged his horse to a gallop, there might have been a rescue.

Arrived at the gallows, it was necessary for the executioners to lift her bodily from the cart and up the steps. Even when tied to the plank she struggled frantically and begged piteously for just one second more of life. The descending knife silenced her cries, and the executioner held up before the eyes of the crowd the bleeding head of the woman who had done little, indeed, to deserve such a death.

The last act of the play compresses into three short scenes the tragic, pitiable story of Du Barry's persecution and death. In the first of these scenes we see her living on her estate in Louveciennes, attended by her faithful servant Denys and one or two friends of her former years. Here, at the instigation of Greive, she is arrested,

although nineteen years have passed since death put an end to her relation with the king. These years have been full of changes, not only for her, but for all France as well, and in no respect are these changes shown more plainly than in the dresses of the revolutionary patriots. In the preceding acts of the drama, we have only seen the laces, ruffles, small clothes and elaborate coiffures of a luxurious and dissolute age. Now we see the ugly beginnings of the sort of dress to which we, of the present generation, have been condemned.

Escorted by soldiers of the Republic, and with the angry murmurs of the mob ringing in her ears, she is taken away to Paris, and the scene changes to her prison cell in the Conciergerie. Here she is visited by Denisot, the judge of the revolutionary court, and two associates, who, while buoying her up with vague hopes of a pardon, take from her a finger ring, the very last bit of property in her possession. This done, they withdraw, the sound of workmen, busy at the scaffold, is heard, and a moment later the priest enters to apprise

her of the failure of her appeal and to hear her last confession.

At no moment during the play does the actress make a more profound impression on her audience than in that in which she realizes for the first time that her last hope is gone and that she must die.

Springing forward with a cry that is surcharged with the bitterest anguish and despair, she begins the pleadings for life which do not cease until the very end. But the sentence has been pronounced, her petition for clemency refused, and her life must come to an end with to-morrow's sun.

But it is the last scene which, more than all of the others, leaves its indelible mark on the memory. And this one is almost completely in accord with the happenings set down in history. In only one particular has Mr. Belasco made use of his license as a dramatist, and that is in bringing Cossé-Brissac on to the scene for a final word of farewell with the woman whom he had loved so fondly. The reason for this is obvious, though, as a matter of fact, Cossé had already been guillotined.

David Belasco.

Surely the sternest preacher of morality could ask no more convincing portrayal of the ending of a dissolute life than Mr. Belasco has given us in this awful representation of the passage of the once pampered and envied Favorite through the mob that surges about the cart that is taking her to the guillotine.

It is midwinter in Paris, and the curtain rises on a scene through whose darkness nothing can be seen but the flakes of falling snow. Almost imperceptibly the night fades before the cold gray light of early dawn, until there comes a moment when it is hard to realize that we are not actually gazing at a deserted street in which the snow is swiftly and silently falling. Little by little the day grows, and then we see that this deserted street is the rue St. Honoré, and that the house directly in front of us is the shop of Madame Labille, where the milliner's apprentice, Jeanette Vaubernier, gained some of her earliest knowledge of the life in which she played such a picturesque and wanton part.

The door of the shop opens and Hor-

tense, the forewoman, who still carries in her heart a loving remembrance of the pretty, wilful Jeanette of other days, peers down the street through the falling flakes. The procession is on its way, and one after another the windows along the street are opened and heads thrust out to peer anxiously in the direction from which the tumbrel bearing the condemned is approaching, to the accompaniment of a hoarse clamor that grows in volume as it draws nearer.

Soldiers take possession of the street and stand ready to keep back the mob of men, women and children that gather from every side, filling every doorway, climbing up on the steps of houses, and even swarming up to places of vantage on the statue in the square.

Now comes the advance guard that in those days accompanied every victim of the reign of terror to the place of execution. A bevy of brazen-faced young girls, called "cart swallows," appear dancing round the cart in which the last of the royal Favorites is taking her final journey.

On the Way to Execution.

As they turn the corner, the mob bursts into hoarse shouts of triumph, and surges against the restraining lines of soldiers in a mad attempt to forestall the executioner's work.

It is a triumph of stage management, this mob, but which one of us, so absorbing is the interest in the play, stops to think of it? Stage mobs there have been in New York a plenty, but never one like this.

It was a wonderful mob, organized and directed according to the system in vogue in the Saxe-Meiningen Company, that roused itself under the spur of Marc Antony's oratory when Ludwig Barnay played at the Thalia Theatre nearly twenty years ago. There was another great mob in "Paul Kauvar" organized and directed by Steele Mackaye. Very effective, too, was the work of Heinrich Couried's mob when "The Weavers" was given at the Irving Place Theatre. There have been dozens of stage mobs that could be cited, but not one in any serious drama that was not black-browed and sullen in

its whole attitude. Here, at one of the most tragic moments that can be imagined, the whole scene swarms with a mob which is exultant and greedy for the blood that is to come and which is nevertheless not sullen but sardonic. It is a mob that taunts its victim with her immoralities and fills the whole street with bursts of hideous laughter at the mere idea of this wretched woman ever having known a love that was pure and honest.

There are a score of different well-conceived and carefully costumed Parisian types in this mob, but no one notices them. The entire interest of the audience is centred in the jolting two-wheeled cart which pauses for a moment on its way to the scaffold in the Place de la Revolution. The cart has three occupants, — the executioner, red-capped and grim; Jeanette Du Barry, white with fear; and the priest in his black robe who remains with her to the end.

It is difficult to conceive of such abject, pitiful terror as that shown by this wretched woman, who crouches at the feet of her

"Swear on the Cross!"

confessor, her beautiful hair cropped close for the knife, the ashen pallor of death already in her face.

"Ha, ha! You're afraid to die!" screams a woman in the mob.

"Yes, I know I'm afraid to die," she responds in piteous tones, and the street echoes with shrill, sardonic, mirthless laughter.

From the balcony of the milliner's shop, Hortense, faithful and courageous, throws a bunch of violets into the cart, and utters a few words of farewell. The mob turns toward her with the fierce remonstrance of wild beasts threatened with the loss of their prey.

Cossé, the one pure love of her life, presses close to her for a parting word, while the mob beats against the line of soldiery and curses and howls till the priest with uplifted cross commands them, in the name of the Lord, to allow the condemned woman to go in peace to her death.

"It's too bad, Cossé," she says at last, in a voice low and despairing and which finds its way into every heart in the audi-

ence, "it's too bad we never went into the country to pick those violets." The driver cracks his whip, the wheels turn, and again, with blood-curdling shouts, the crowd surges around the cart as it passes on to the scaffold, and we who have watched the play can almost see the knife that awaits her coming, the same knife that gleamed across the actress's fancy the moment she set foot on the stage.

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