

# LOUIS SAINT-SIMON

MEMOIRS OF LOUIS XIV  
AND HIS COURT AND OF  
THE REGENCY. VOLUME  
14

Louis Saint-Simon

**Memoirs of Louis XIV and His  
Court and of the Regency. Volume 14**

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**Saint-Simon L. d.**

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# Duc de Saint-Simon

## Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency – Volume 14

### CHAPTER CV

For a long time a species of war had been declared between the King of England and his son, the Prince of Wales, which had caused much scandal; and which had enlisted the Court on one side, and made much stir in the Parliament. George had more than once broken out with indecency against his son; he had long since driven him from the palace, and would not see him. He had so cut down his income that he could scarcely subsist. The father never could endure this son, because he did not believe him to be his own. He had more than suspected the Duchess, his wife, to be in relations with Count Konigsmarck. He surprised him one morning leaving her chamber; threw him into a hot oven, and shut up his wife in a chateau for the rest of her days. The Prince of Wales, who found himself ill-treated for a cause of which he was personally innocent, had always borne with impatience the presence of his mother and the aversion of his father. The Princess of Wales, who had much sense, intelligence, grace, and art, had softened things as much as possible; and the King was unable to refuse her his esteem, or avoid loving her. She had conciliated all England; and her Court, always large, boasted of the presence of the most accredited and the most distinguished persons. The Prince of Wales feeling his strength, no longer studied his father, and blamed the ministers with words that at least alarmed them. They feared the credit of the Princess of Wales; feared lest they should be attacked by the Parliament, which often indulges in this pleasure. These considerations became more and more pressing as they discovered what was brewing against them; plans such as would necessarily have rebounded upon the King. They communicated their fears to him, and indeed tried to make it up with his son, on certain conditions, through the medium of the Princess of Wales, who, on her side, felt all the consciousness of sustaining a party against the King, and who always had sincerely desired peace in the royal family. She profited by this conjuncture; made use of the ascendancy she had over her husband, and the reconciliation was concluded. The King gave a large sum to the Prince of Wales, and consented to see him. The ministers were saved, and all appeared forgotten.

The excess to which things had been carried between father and son had not only kept the entire nation attentive to the intestine disorders ready to arise, but had made a great stir all over Europe; each power tried to blow this fire into a blaze, or to stifle it according as interest suggested. The Archbishop of Cambrai, whom I shall continue to call the Abbe Dubois, was just then very anxiously looking out for his cardinal's hat, which he was to obtain through the favour of England, acting upon that of the Emperor with the Court of Rome. Dubois, overjoyed at the reconciliation which had taken place, wished to show this in a striking manner, in order to pay his court to the King of England. He named, therefore, the Duc de la Force to go to England, and compliment King George on the happy event that had occurred.

The demonstration of joy that had been resolved on in France was soon known in England. George, annoyed by the stir that his domestic squabbles had made throughout all Europe, did not wish to see it prolonged by the sensation that this solemn envoy would cause. He begged the Regent, therefore, not to send him one. As the scheme had been determined on only order to please him, the journey of the Duc de la Force was abandoned almost as soon as declared. Dubois had the double credit, with the King of England, of having arranged this demonstration of joy, and of giving it up; in both cases solely for the purpose of pleasing his Britannic Majesty.

Towards the end of this year, 1720, the Duc de Brissac married Mlle. Pecoil, a very rich heiress, whose father was a 'maitre des requetes', and whose mother was daughter of Le Gendre, a very wealthy merchant of Rouen. The father of Mlle. Pecoil was a citizen of Lyons, a wholesale dealer, and extremely avaricious. He had a large iron safe, or strong-box, filled with money, in a cellar, shut in by an iron door, with a secret lock, and to arrive at which other doors had to be passed through. He disappeared so long one day, that his wife and two or three valets or servants that he had sought him everywhere. They well knew that he had a hiding-place, because they had sometimes seen him descending into his cellar, flat-candlestick in hand, but no one had ever dared to follow him.

Wondering what had become of him, they descended to the cellar, broke open the doors, and found at last the iron one. They were obliged to send for workmen to break it open, by attacking the wall in which it was fixed. After much labour they entered, and found the old miser dead in his strong-box, the secret spring of which he had apparently not been able to find, after having locked himself in; a horrible end in every respect.

The Brissacs have not been very particular in their alliances for some time, and yet appear no richer. The gold flies away; the dross remains.

I had almost forgotten to say that in the last day of this year, 1720, a Prince of Wales was born at Rome.

The Prince was immediately baptised by the Bishop; of Montefiascone, and named Charles. The event caused a great stir in the Holy City. The Pope sent his compliments to their Britannic Majesties, and forwarded to the King of England (the Pretender) 10,000 Roman crowns, gave him, for his life, a country house at Albano, which until then, he had only lent him, and 2000 crowns to furnish it. A Te Deum was sung in the chapel of the Pope, in his presence, and there were rejoicings at Rome. When the Queen of England was able to see company, Cardinal Tanora came in state, as representative of the Sacred College, to congratulate her.

The birth of the Prince also made much stir at the Court of England, and among the priests and Jacobites of that country. For very different reasons, not only the Catholics and Protestants, enemies of the government, were ravished at it, but nearly all the three realms showed as much joy as they dared; not from any attachment to the dethroned house, but for the satisfaction of seeing a line continue with which they could always menace and oppose their kings and the royal family.

[Illustration: Jacobites Drinking To The Pretender—Painted by F. Willems—1208.]

In France we were afraid to show any public feeling upon the event. We were too much in the hands of England; the Regent and Dubois too much the humble servants of the house of Hanover; Dubois especially, waiting, as he was, so anxiously for his cardinal's hat. He did not, as will be seen, have to wait much longer.

The new Pope had given, in writing, a promise to Dubois, that if elected to the chair of St. Peter he would make him cardinal. Time had flown, and the promise was not yet fulfilled. The impatience of Dubois increased with his hopes, and gave him no repose. He was much bewildered when he learnt that, on the 16th of June, 1721, the Pope had elevated to the cardinalship; his brother, who for ten years had been Bishop of Terracine and Benedictine monk of Mount Cassini. Dubois had expected that no promotion would be made in which he was not included. But here was a promotion of a single person only. He was furious; this fury did not last long, however; a month after, that is to say, on the 16th of July, the Pope made him cardinal with Dion Alexander Alboni, nephew of the deceased Pope, and brother of the Cardinal Camarlingue.

Dubois received the news and the compliment that followed with extreme joy, but managed to contain himself with some little decency, and to give all the honour of his nomination to M. le Duc d'Orleans, who, sooth to say, had had scarcely anything to do with it. But he could not prevent himself from saying to everybody that what honoured him more than the Roman purple was the unanimous eagerness of all the European powers to procure him this distinction; to press the Pope to award it; to desire that his promotion would be hastened without waiting for their nominations.

He incessantly blew these reports about everywhere without ever being out of breath; but nobody was the dupe of them.

Shortly after this, that is, on the last day of July, the King, who had until then been in perfect health, woke with headache and pain in the throat; shivering followed, and towards afternoon, the pains in the head and throat being augmented, he went to bed. I repaired the next day about twelve to inquire after him. I found he had passed a bad night, and that within the last two hours he had grown worse. I saw everywhere consternation. I had the grandes entrees, therefore I went into his chamber. I found it very empty. M. le Duc d'Orleans, seated in the chimney corner, looked exceedingly downcast and solitary. I approached him for a moment, then I went to the King's bed. At this moment Boulduc, one of the apothecaries, gave him something to take. The Duchesse de la Ferme, who, through the Duchesse de Ventadour, her sister, had all the entrees as godmother to the King, was at the heels of Boulduc, and turning round to see who was approaching, saw me, and immediately said in a tone neither high nor low, "He is poisoned! he is poisoned!"

"Hold your tongue, Madame," said I. "This is terrible."

But she kept on, and spoke so loudly that I feared the King would hear her. Boulduc and I looked at each other, and I immediately withdrew from the bed and from this mad woman, with whom I was in no way familiar. During this illness, which lasted only five days (but of which the first three were violent) I was much troubled, but at the same time I was exceedingly glad that I had refused to be the King's governor, though the Regent had over and over again pressed me to accept the office. There were too many evil reports in circulation against M. le Duc d'Orleans for me to dream of filling this position. For was I not his bosom friend known to have been on the most intimate terms with him ever since his child hood—and if anything had happened to excite new suspicions against him, what would not have been said? The thought of this so troubled me during the King's illness, that I used to wake in the night with a start, and, oh, what joy was mine when I remembered that I had not this duty on my head!

The malady, as I have said, was not long, and the convalescence was prompt, which restored tranquillity and joy, and caused an overflow of Te Deums and rejoicing. Helvetius had all the honour of the cure; the doctors had lost their heads, he preserved his, and obstinately proposed bleeding at the foot, at a consultation at which M. le Duc d'Orleans was present; his advice prevailed, change for the better immediately took place, cure soon after.

The Marechal de Villeroy (the King's governor) did not let slip this occasion for showing all his venom and his baseness; he forgot nothing, left nothing undone in order to fix suspicion upon M. le Duc d'Orleans, and thus pay his court to the robe. No magistrate, however unimportant, could come to the Tuileries whom he did not himself go to with the news of the King and caresses; whilst to the first nobles he was inaccessible. The magistrates of higher standing he allowed to enter at all times into the King's chamber, even to stand by his bed in order to see him, while they who had the 'grandes entrees' with difficulty enjoyed a similar privilege.

He did the same during the first days of convalescence, which he prolonged as much as possible, in order to give the same distinction to the magistrates, come at what time they might, and privately to the great people of the Court and the ambassadors. He fancied himself a tribune of the people, and aspired to their favour and their dangerous power. From this he turned to other affectations which had the same aim against M. le Duc d'Orleans. He multiplied the Te Deums that he induced the various ranks of petty officers of the King to have sung on different days and in different churches; he attended all, took with him as many people as he could, and for six weeks continued this game. A Te Deum was sung in every church in Paris. He spoke of nothing else, and above the real joy he felt at the King's recovery, he put on a false one which had a party smell about it, and which avowed designs not to be mistaken.

The King went in state to Notre Dame and Saint Genevieve to thank God. These mummeries, thus prolonged, extended to the end of August and the fete Saint-Louis. Each year there, is on that

day a concert in the garden. The Marechal de Villeroy took care that on this occasion, the concert should become a species of fete, to which he added a display of fireworks. Less than this would have been enough to draw the crowd. It was so great that a pin could not have fallen to the ground through the mass of people wedged against each other in the garden. The windows of the Tuileries were ornamented, and were filled with people. All the roofs of the Carrousel, as well as the Place, were covered with spectators.

The Marechal de Villeroy was in; his element, and importuned the King, who tried to hide himself in the corners at every moment. The Marechal took him by the arm, and led him, now to the windows where he could see the Carrousel, and the houses covered with people; now to those which looked upon the garden, full of the innumerable crowd waiting for the fete. Everybody cried 'Vive le Roi!' when he appeared, but had not the Marechal detained him, he would have run away and hid himself.

"Look, my master," the Marechal would say, "all that crowd, all these people are yours, all belong to you; you are the master of them: look at them a little therefore, to please them, for they are all yours, they are all devoted to you."

A nice lesson this for a governor to give to a young King, repeating it every time he leads him to the windows, so fearful is he lest the boy- sovereign shall forget it! I do not know whether he received similar lessons from those who had the charge of his education. At last the Marechal led him upon the terrace, where, beneath a dais, he heard the end of the concert, and afterwards saw the fireworks. The lesson of the Marechal de Villeroy, so often and so publicly repeated, made much stir, and threw but little honour upon him. He himself experienced the first effect of his fine instruction.

M. le Duc d'Orleans conducted himself in a manner simple, so prudent, that he infinitely gained by it. His cares and his reasonable anxiety were measured; there was much reserve in his conversation, an exact and sustained attention in his language, and in his countenance, which allowed nothing to escape him, and which showed as little as possible that he was the successor to the crown; above all, he never gave cause for people to believe that he thought the King's illness more or less serious than it was, or that his hopes were stronger than his fears.

He could not but feel that in a conjuncture so critical, all eyes were fixed upon him, and as in truth he never wished for the crown (however unlikely the statement may seem), he had no need to constrain himself in any way, but simply to be measured in his bearing. His conduct was, in fact, much remarked, and the cabal opposed to him entirely reduced to silence. Nobody spoke to him upon the event that might happen, not even his most familiar friends and acquaintances, myself included; and at this he was much pleased. He acted entirely upon the suggestions of his own good sense.

This was not the first time, let me add, that the Marechal de Villeroy, in his capacity of governor of the King, had tacitly insulted M. le Duc d'Orleans. He always, in fact, affected, in the discharge of his duties, a degree of care, vigilance, and scrutiny, the object of which was evident. He was particularly watchful of the food of the King, taking it up with his own hands, and making a great show of this precaution; as though the King could not have been poisoned a thousand times over in spite of such ridiculous care. 'Twas because M. le Duc d'Orleans was vexed with this childish behaviour, so calculated to do him great injury, that he wished me to supersede the Marechal de Villeroy as governor of the King. This, as before said, I would never consent to. As for the Marechal, his absurdities met with their just reward, but at a date I have not yet come to.

## CHAPTER CVI

Before this illness of the King, that is to say, at the commencement of June, I went one day to work with M. le Duc d'Orleans, and found him alone, walking up and down the grand apartment.

"Holloa! there," said he, as soon as he saw me; then, taking me by the hand, "I cannot leave you in ignorance of a thing which I desire above all others, which is of the utmost importance to me, and which will cause you as much joy as me; but you must keep it profoundly secret." Then bursting out laughing, "If M. de Cambrai knew that I had told it to you, he would never pardon me." And he proceeded to state that perfect reconciliation had been established between himself and the King and Queen of Spain; that arrangements had been made by which our young King was to marry the Infanta of Spain, as soon as he should be old enough; and the Prince of the Asturias (the heir to the Spanish throne) was to marry Mademoiselle de Chartres, the Regent's daughter.

If my joy at this was great, my astonishment was even greater; M. le Duc d'Orleans embraced me, and the first surprise over, I asked him how he had contrived to bring about these marriages; above all, that of his daughter. He replied that it had all been done in a trice by the Abbe Dubois, who was a regular devil when once he had set his mind upon anything; that the King of Spain had been transported at the idea of the King of France marrying the Infanta; and that the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias had been the 'sine qua non' of the other.

After we had well talked over the matter and rejoiced thereon, I said to the Regent that the proposed marriage of his daughter must be kept profoundly secret until the moment of her departure for Spain; and that of the King also, until the time for their execution arrived; so as to prevent the jealousy of all Europe. At this union, so grand and so intimate, of the two branches of the royal family, such a union having always been the terror of Europe and disunion the object of all its policy—this policy having only too well succeeded—I urged that the sovereigns must be left as long as possible in the confidence they had acquired, the Infanta above all, being but three years old (she was born at Madrid on the morning of the 30th of March, 1718), by which means the fears of Europe upon the marriage of Mademoiselle de Chartres with the Prince of the Asturias would be coloured—the Prince could wait, he having been born in August, 1707, and being accordingly only fourteen years of age. "You are quite right," replied M. le Duc d'Orleans, "but this can't be, because in Spain they wish to make public the declarations of marriage at once, indeed, as soon as the demand is made and the declaration can be signed."

"What madness!" cried I; "what end can this tocsin have except to arouse all Europe and put it in movement! They must be made to understand this, and we must stick to it; nothing is so important."

"All this is true," said M. le Duc d'Orleans. "I think exactly like you, but they are obstinate in Spain; they have wished matters to be arranged thus, and their wishes have been agreed to. Everything is arranged, fixed, finished. I am so much interested in the matter that you surely would not have advised me to break off for this condition."

I said of course not, shrugging my shoulders at his unseasonable impatience.

During the discussion which followed, I did not forget to think of myself, the occasion being so opportune for making the fortunes of my second son. I remembered then, that as matters were advanced to this point, a special ambassador must be sent to Spain, to ask the hand of the Infanta for the King, and to sign the compact of marriage; that the ambassador must be a nobleman of mark and title, and thus I begged the Duke to give me this commission, with a recommendation to the King of Spain, so as to make my second son, the Marquis of Ruffec, grandee of Spain.

M. le Duc d'Orleans scarcely allowed me to finish, immediately accorded me what I had asked, promised me the recommendation with many expressions of friendship, and asked me to keep the whole matter secret, and make no preparation that would disclose it.

I knew well enough why he enjoined me to secrecy. He wished to have the time to make Dubois swallow this pill. My thanks expressed, I asked him two favours; first, not to pay me as an ambassador, but to give me a round sum sufficient to provide for all my expenses without ruining myself; second, not to entrust any business to me which might necessitate a long stay in Spain, inasmuch as I did not wish to quit him, and wanted to go to Spain simply for the purpose of obtaining the honour above alluded to for my second son. The fact is, I feared that Dubois, not being able to hinder my embassy, might keep me in Spain in a sort of exile, under pretence of business, in order to get rid of me altogether. Events proved that my precaution was not altogether useless.

M. le Duc d'Orleans accorded both the favours I asked, with many obliging remarks, and a hope that my absence would not be long. I thought I had then done great things for my family, and went home much pleased. But, *mon Dieu!* what are the projects and the successes of men!

Dubois, as I expected, was vexed beyond measure at my embassy, and resolved to ruin me and throw me into disgrace. I was prepared for this, and I soon saw it was so. At first, I received from him nothing but professions of friendship and of attachment for me, congratulations that M. le Duc d'Orleans had accorded to me an embassy my merit deserved, and which would be productive of such useful results for my children. He took care, however, in the midst of these fine phrases, to introduce not one word upon my arrangements, so that he might be able to drive me into a corner at the last moment, and cause me all the inconvenience possible. He slipped through my hands like an eel until the moment for my departure drew near. As he saw it approach, he began to preach to me of magnificence, and wished to enter into details respecting my suite. I described it to him, and everybody else would have been satisfied, but as his design was to ruin me, he cried out against it, and augmented it by a third. I represented to him the excessive expense this augmentation would cause, the state of the finances, the loss upon the exchange: his sole reply was that the dignity of the King necessitated this expense and show; and that his Majesty would bear the charge. I spoke to M. le Duc d'Orleans, who listened to me with attention, but being persuaded by the Cardinal, held the same language.

This point settled, the Cardinal must needs know how many coats I should take, and how many I should give to my sons.—in a word, there was not a single detail of table or stable that he did not enter into, and that he did not double. My friends exhorted me not to be obstinate with a man so impetuous, so dangerous, so completely in possession of M. le Duc d'Orleans, pointing out to me that when once I was away he might profit by my absence, and that, meanwhile, everything relating to my embassy must pass through his hands. All this was only too true. I was obliged, therefore, to yield, although I felt that, once embarked, the King's purse would be spared at the expense of mine.

As soon as the marriages were declared, I asked to be declared as ambassador, so that I might openly make my preparations, which, it will be remembered, I had been forbidden to do. Now that there was no secret about the marriage, I fancied there need be no secret as to the ambassador by whom they were to be conducted. I was deceived: Whatever I might allege, the prohibition remained. The Cardinal wished to put me to double the necessary expense, by compelling me to have my liveries, dresses, etc., made in the utmost precipitation; and this happened. He thought, too, I should not be able to provide myself with everything in time; and that he might represent this to M. le Duc d'Orleans, and in Spain, as a fault, and excite envious cries against me.

Nevertheless, I did not choose to press him: to announce my embassy, at the same time trying to obtain from him the instructions I was to receive, and which, passing through him and the Regent done, told nothing to the public, as my preparations would have done. But I could not obtain them. Dubois carelessly replied to me, that in one or two conversations the matter would be exhausted. He wished me to know nothing, except vaguely; to leave no time for reflection, for questions, for explanations; and to throw me thus into embarrassments, and to cause me to commit blunders which he intended to make the most of.

At last, tired of so many and such dangerous postponements, I went on Tuesday, the 23rd of September, to M. le Duc d'Orleans, arranging my visit so that it took place when he was in his apartments at the Tuileries; there I spoke with such effect, that he said I had only to show myself to the King. He led me to his Majesty at once, and there and then my embassy was announced. Upon leaving the King's cabinet, M. le Duc d'Orleans made me jump into his coach, which was waiting for him, and took me to the Palais Royal, where we began to speak seriously upon the affairs of my embassy.

I fancy that Cardinal Dubois was much annoyed at what had been done, and that he would have liked to postpone the declaration yet a little longer. But this now was impossible. The next day people were sent to work upon my equipments, the Cardinal showing as much eagerness and impatience respecting them, as he had before shown apathy and indifference. He urged on the workmen; must needs see each livery and each coat as it was finished; increased the magnificence of each; and had all my coats and those of my children sent to him. At last, the hurry to make me set out was so great, that such of the things as were ready he sent on by rapid conveyance to Bayonne, at a cost by no means trifling to me.

The Cardinal next examined the list of persons I intended to have with me, and approved it. To my extreme surprise he said, however, that I must add forty officers of cavalry and infantry, from the regiments of my sons. I cried out against the madness and the expense of such a numerous military accompaniment. I represented that it was not usual for ambassadors, with a peaceful mission, to take with them such an imposing force by way of escort; I showed that these officers, being necessarily gay men, might be led away into indiscreet gallantries, which would give me more trouble than all the business of my embassy. Nothing could be more evident, true, and reasonable than my representations, nothing more useless or worse received.

The Cardinal had resolved to ruin me, and to leave me in Spain with all the embarrassment, business, and annoyances he could. He rightly thought that nothing was more likely to make him succeed than to charge me with forty officers. Not finding them, I took only twenty-nine, and if the Cardinal succeeded as far as concerned my purse, I was so fortunate, and these gentlemen were so discreet, that he succeeded in no other way.

Let me add here, before I give the details of my journey to Spain, in what manner the announcement of these two marriages was received by the King and the public.

His Majesty was by no means gratified when he heard that a wife had been provided for him. At the first mention of marriage he burst out crying. The Regent, M. le Duc, and M. de Frejus, had all the trouble in the world to extract a "yes" from him, and to induce him to attend the Regency Council, in which it was necessary that he should announce his consent to the proposed union, or be present while it was announced for him. The council was held, and the King came to it, his eyes swollen and red, and his look very serious.

Some moments of silence passed, during which M. le Duc d'Orleans threw his eyes over all the company (who appeared deeply expectant), and then fixed them on the King, and asked if he might announce to the council the marriage of his Majesty. The King replied by a dry "yes," and in a rather low tone, but which was heard by the four or five people on each side of him, and the Regent immediately announced the marriage. Then, after taking the opinions of the council, which were for the most part favorable, he turned towards the King with a smiling air, as though inviting him to assume the same, and said, "There, then, Sire, your marriage is approved and passed, and a grand and fortunate matter finished." The council then broke up.

The news of what had taken place immediately ran over all Paris. The Tuileries and the Palais Royal were soon filled with people who came to present themselves before the King to compliment him and the Regent on the conclusion of this grand marriage, and the crowd continued the following days. The King had much difficulty in assuming some little gaiety the first day, but on the morrow he was less sombre, and by degrees he quite recovered himself.

M. le Duc d'Orleans took care not to announce the marriage of his daughter with the Prince of the Asturias at the same time that the other marriage was announced. He declared it, however, the next day, and the news was received with the utmost internal vexation by the cabal opposed to him. Men, women, people of all conditions who belonged to that cabal, lost all countenance. It was a pleasure to me, I admit, to look upon them. They were utterly disconcerted. Nevertheless, after the first few days of overthrow, they regained courage, and set to work in order to break off both the marriages.

## CHAPTER CVII

I have already said that Dubois looked most unfavourably upon my embassy to Spain, and that I saw he was determined to do all in his power to throw obstacles in its way. I had fresh proofs of this. First, before my departure: when he gave me my written instructions, he told me that in Spain I must take precedence of everybody during the signing of the King's contract of marriage, and at the chapel, at the two ceremonies of the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias, allowing no one to be before me!

I represented to him that the Pope's nuncio would be present, and that to him the ambassadors of France gave place everywhere, and even the ambassadors of the Emperor also, who, without opposition, preceded those of the King. He replied that that was true, except in special cases like the present, and that his instructions must be obeyed: My surprise was great at so strange an order. I tried to move him by appealing to his pride; asking him how I should manage with a cardinal, if one happened to be present, and with the majordomo-major, who corresponds, but in a very superior degree, with our grand master of France. He flew in a rage, and declared that I must precede the majordomo-major also; that there would be no difficulty in doing so; and that, as to the cardinals, I should find none. I shrugged my shoulders, and begged him to think of the matter. Instead of replying, to me, he said he had forgotten to acquaint me with a most essential particular: it was, that I must take care not to visit anybody until I had been first visited.

I replied that the visiting question had not been forgotten in my instructions, and that those instructions were to the effect that I should act in this respect as the Duc de Saint-Aignan had acted, and that the usage he had followed was to pay the first visit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to the Councillors of State (when there were any), who are the same as are known here under the name of ministers. Thereupon he broke out afresh, prated, talked about the dignity of the King, and did not allow me the opportunity of saying another word. I abridged my visit, therefore, and went away.

However strange might appear to me these verbal orders of such a new kind, I thought it best to speak to the Duc de Saint-Aignan and Amelot on the subject, so as to convince myself of their novelty. Both these ambassadors, as well as those who had preceded them, had visited in an exactly opposite manner; and they thought it extravagant that I should precede the nuncio, no matter where. Amelot told me, moreover, that I should suffer all sorts of annoyances, and succeed in nothing, if I refused the first visit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs; that as for the Councillors of State, they existed only in name, the office having fallen into desuetude; and that I must pay other visits to certain officers he named (three in number), who would be justly offended and piqued if I refused them what every one who had preceded me had rendered them. He added that I had better take good care to do so, unless I wished to remain alone in my house, and have the cold shoulder turned upon me by every principal person of the Court.

By this explanation of Amelot I easily comprehended the reason of these singular verbal orders. The Cardinal wished to secure my failure in Spain, and my disgrace in France: in Spain by making me offend at the outset all the greatest people and the minister through whose hands all my business would pass; draw upon myself thus complaints here, which, as I had no written orders to justify my conduct, he (Dubois) would completely admit the justice of, and then disavow me, declaring he had given me exactly opposite orders. If I did not execute what he had told me, I felt that he would accuse me of sacrificing the King's honour and the dignity of the Crown, in order to please in Spain, and obtain thus honours for myself and my sons, and that he would prohibit the latter to accept them. There would have been less uproar respecting the nuncio; but if I preceded him, Dubois felt persuaded that the Court of Rome would demand justice; and this justice in his hands would have been a shameful recall.

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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