

LOUIS SAINT-SIMON

MEMOIRS OF LOUIS XIV
AND HIS COURT AND OF
THE REGENCY. VOLUME
13

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Court and of the Regency. Volume 13**

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Duc de Saint-Simon

Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency – Volume 13

CHAPTER XCVII

To go back, now, to the remaining events of the year 1719.

The Marquise de Charlus, sister of Mezieres, and mother of the Marquis de Levi, who has since become a duke and a peer, died rich and old. She was the exact picture of an "old clothes" woman and was thus subject to many insults from those who did not know her, which she by no means relished. To relieve a little the seriousness of these memoirs, I will here relate an amusing adventure of which she was heroine.

She was very avaricious, and a great gambler. She would have passed the night up to her knees in water in order to play. Heavy gambling at lansquenet was carried on at Paris in the evening, at Madame la Princesse de Conti's. Madame de Charlus supped there one Friday, between the games, much company being present. She was no better clad than at other times, and wore a head-dress, in vogue at that day, called commode, not fastened, but put on or taken off like a wig or a night-cap. It was fashionable, then, to wear these headdresses very high.

Madame de Charlus was near the Archbishop of Rheims, Le Tellier. She took a boiled egg, that she cracked, and in reaching for some salt, set her head dress on fire, at a candle near, without perceiving it. The Archbishop, who saw her all in flames, seized the head-dress and flung it upon the ground. Madame de Charlus, in her surprise, and indignant at seeing her self thus uncovered, without knowing why, threw her egg in the Archbishop's face, and made him a fine mess.

Nothing but laughter was heard; and all the company were in convulsions of mirth at the grey, dirty, and hoary head of Madame de Charlus, and the Archbishop's omelette; above all, at the fury and abuse of Madame de Charlus, who thought she had been affronted, and who was a long time before she would understand the cause, irritated at finding herself thus treated before everybody. The head-dress was burnt, Madame la Princesse de Conti gave her another, but before it was on her head everybody had time to contemplate her charms, and she to grow in fury. Her husband died three months after her. M. de Levi expected to find treasures; there had been such; but they had taken wing and flown away.

About this time appeared some verses under the title of Philippiques, which were distributed with extraordinary promptitude and abundance. La Grange, formerly page of Madame la Princesse de Conti, was the author, and did not deny it. All that hell could vomit forth, true and false, was expressed in the most beautiful verses, most poetic in style, and with all the art and talent imaginable. M. le Duc d'Orleans knew it, and wished to see the poem, but he could not succeed in getting it, for no one dared to show it to him.

He spoke of it several times to me, and at last demanded with such earnestness that I should bring it to him, that I could not refuse. I brought it to him accordingly, but read it to him I declared I never would. He took it, therefore, and read it in a low tone, standing in the window of his little cabinet, where we were. He judged it in reading much as it was, for he stopped from time to time to speak to me, and without appearing much moved. But all on a sudden I saw him change countenance, and turn towards me, tears in his eyes, and himself ready to drop.

"Ah," said he, "this is too much, this horrible poem beats me completely."

He was at the part where the scoundrel shows M. le Duc d'Orleans having the design to poison the King, and quite ready to execute his crime. It is the part where the author redoubles his energy,

his poetry, his invocations, his terrible and startling beauties, his invectives, his hideous pictures, his touching portraits of the youth and innocence of the King, and of the hopes he has, adjuring the nation to save so dear a victim from the barbarity of a murderer; in a word, all that is most delicate, most tender, stringent, and blackest, most pompous, and most moving, is there.

I wished to profit by the dejected silence into which the reading of this poem had thrown M. le Duc d'Orleans, to take from him the execrable paper, but I could not succeed; he broke out into just complaints against such horrible wickedness, and into tenderness for the King; then finished his reading, that he interrupted more than once to speak to me. I never saw a man so penetrated, so deeply touched, so overwhelmed with injustice so enormous and sustained. As for me, I could not contain myself. To see him, the most prejudiced, if of good faith, would have been convinced he was innocent of the crime imputed to him, by the horror he displayed at it. I have said all, when I state that I recovered myself with difficulty, and that I had all the pains in the world to compose him a little.

This La Grange, who was of no personal value, yet a good poet—only that, and never anything else—had, by his poetry, insinuated himself into Sceaux, where he had become one of the great favourites of Madame du Maine. She and her husband knew his life, his habits, and his mercenary villainy. They knew, too, how to profit by it. He was arrested shortly afterwards, and sent to the Isle de Sainte Marguerite, which he obtained permission to leave before the end of the Regency. He had the audacity to show himself everywhere in Paris, and while he was appearing at the theatres and in all public places, people had the impudence to spread the report that M. le Duc d'Orleans had had him killed! M. le Duc d'Orleans and his enemies have been equally indefatigable; the latter in the blackest villainies, the Prince in the most unfruitful clemency, to call it by no more expressive name.

Before the Regent was called to the head of public affairs, I recommended him to banish Pere Tellier when he had the power to do so. He did not act upon my advice, or only partially; nevertheless, Tellier was disgraced, and after wandering hither and thither, a very firebrand wherever he went, he was confined by his superiors in La Fleche.

This tyrant of the Church, furious that he could no longer move, which had been his sole consolation during the end of his reign and his terrible domination, found himself at La Fleche, reduced to a position as insupportable as it was new to him.

The Jesuits, spies of each other, and jealous and envious of those who have the superior authority, are marvellously ungrateful towards those who, having occupied high posts, or served the company with much labour and success, become useless to it, by their age or their infirmities. They regard them with disdain, and instead of bestowing upon them the attention merited by their age, their services, and their merit, leave them in the dreariest solitude, and begrudge them even their food!

I have with my own eyes seen three examples of this in these Jesuits, men of much piety and honour, who had filled positions of confidence and of talent, and with whom I was very intimate. The first had been rector of their establishment at Paris, was distinguished by excellent works of piety, and was for several years assistant of the general at Rome, at the death of whom he returned to Paris; because the rule is, that the new general has new assistants. Upon his return to the Paris establishment he was put into a garret, at the very top of the house, amid solitude, contempt, and want.

The direction of the royal conscience had been the principal occupation of the two others, one of whom had even been proposed as confessor to Madame la Dauphine. One was long ill of a malady he died of. He was not properly nourished, and I sent him his dinner every day, for more than five months, because I had seen his pittance. I sent him even remedies, for he could not refrain from admitting to me that he suffered from the treatment he was subjected to.

The third, very old and very infirm, had not a better fate. At last, being no longer able to hold out, he asked to be allowed to pay a visit to my Versailles house (after having explained himself to me), under pretext of fresh air. He remained there several months, and died at the noviciate in Paris. Such is the fate of all the Jesuits, without excepting the most famous, putting aside a few who having shone at the Court and in the world by their sermons and their merit, and having made many friends

—as Peres Bortaloue, La Rue, Gaillard—have been guaranteed from the general disgrace, because, often visited by the principal persons of the Court and the town, policy did not permit them to be treated like the rest, for fear of making so many considerable people notice what they would not have suffered without disturbance and scandal.

It was, then, in this abandonment and this contempt that Pere Tellier remained at La Fleche, although he had from the Regent four thousand livres pension. He had ill-treated everybody. When he was confessor of the King, not one of his brethren approached him without trembling, although most of them were the "big-wigs" of the company. Even the general of the company was forced to bend beneath the despotism he exercised upon all. There was not a Jesuit who did not disapprove the violence of his conduct, or who did not fear it would injure the society. All hated him, as a minister is hated who is coarse, harsh, inaccessible, egotistical, and who takes pleasure in showing his power and his disdain.

His exile, and the conduct that drew it upon him, were fresh motives for hatred against him, unveiling, as they did, a number of secret intrigues he had been concerned in, and which he had great interest in hiding. All these things together did not render agreeable to Tellier his forced retirement at La Fleche. He found there sharp superiors and equals, instead of the general terror his presence had formerly caused among the Jesuits. All now showed nothing but contempt for him, and took pleasure in making him sensible of it. This King of the Church, in part of the State, and in private of his society, became a common Jesuit like the rest, and under superiors; it may be imagined what a hell this was to a man so impetuous and so accustomed to a domination without reply, and without bounds, and abused in every fashion. Thus he did not endure it long. Nothing more was heard of him, and he died after having been only six months at La Fleche.

There was another death, which I may as well mention here, as it occurred about the same time.

On Saturday evening, the 15th of April, 1719, the celebrated and fatal Madame de Maintenon died at Saint-Cyr. What a stir this event would have made in Europe, had it happened a few years earlier. It was scarcely mentioned in Paris!

I have already said so much respecting this woman, so unfortunately famous, that I will say but little more now. Her life at Saint-Cyr was divided between her spiritual duties, the letters she received, from her religious correspondents, and the answers she gave to them. She took the communion twice a-week, ordinarily between seven and eight o'clock in the morning; not, as Dangeau says in his Memoires, at midnight or every day. She was very rich, having four thousand livres pension per month from the Regent, besides other emoluments. She had, too, her estate at Maintenon, and some other property. With all this wealth, too, she had not a farthing of expense at Saint-Cyr. Everything was provided for herself and servants and their horses, even wood, coals, and candles. She had nothing to buy, except dress for herself and for her people. She kept a steward, a valet, people for the horses and the kitchen, a coach, seven or eight horses, one or two others for the saddle, besides having the young ladies of Saint-Cyr, chambermaids, and Mademoiselle d'Aumale to wait upon her.

The fall of the Duc du Maine at the Bed of justice struck the first blow at her. It is not too much to presume that she was well informed of the measures and the designs of this darling, and that this hope had sustained her; but when she saw him arrested she succumbed; continuous fever seized her, and she died at eighty-three years of age, in the full possession of all her intellect.

Regret for her loss, which was not even universal in Saint-Cyr, scarcely passed the walls of that community. Aubigny, Archbishop of Rouen, her pretended cousin, was the only man I ever heard of, who was fool enough to die of grief on account of it. But he was so afflicted by this loss, that he fell ill, and soon followed her.

CHAPTER XCVII

Madame la Duchesse de Berry was living as usual, amid the loftiest pride, and the vilest servitude; amid penitence the most austere at the Carmelite convent of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and suppers the most profaned by vile company, filthiness, and impiety; amid the most shameless debauchery, and the most horrible fear of the devil and death; when lo! she fell ill at the Luxembourg.

I must disguise nothing more, especially as what I am relating belongs to history; and never in these memoirs have I introduced details upon gallantry except such as were necessary to the proper comprehension of important or interesting matters to which they related. Madame la Duchesse de Berry would constrain herself in nothing; she was indignant that people would dare to speak of what she did not take the trouble to hide from them; and nevertheless she was grieved to death that her conduct was known.

She was in the family way by Rion, but hid—it as much as she could. Madame de Mouchy was their go-between, although her conduct was as clear as day. Rion and Mouchy, in fact, were in love with each other, and had innumerable facilities for indulging their passion. They laughed at the Princess, who was their dupe, and from whom they drew in council all they could. In one word, they were the masters of her and of her household, and so insolently, that M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, who knew them and hated them, feared them also and temporised with them. Madame de Saint-Simon, sheltered from all that, extremely loved and respected by all the household, and respected even by this couple who made themselves so much dreaded and courted, only saw Madame la Duchesse de Berry during the moments of presentation at the Luxembourg, whence she returned as soon as all was finished, entirely ignorant of what was passing, though she might have been perfectly instructed.

The illness of Madame la Duchesse de Berry came on, and this illness, ill prepared for by suppers washed down by wine and strong liquors, became stormy and dangerous. Madame de Saint-Simon could not avoid becoming assiduous in her attendance as soon as the peril appeared, but she never would yield to the instances of M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, who, with all the household; wished her to sleep in the chamber allotted to her, and which she never put foot in, not even during the day. She found Madame la Duchesse de Berry shut up in a little chamber, which had private entrances—very useful just then, with no one near her but La Mouchy and Rion, and a few trusty waiting-women. All in attendance had free entrance to this room. M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans were not allowed to enter when they liked; of course it was the same with the lady of honour, the other ladies, the chief femme de chambre, and the doctors. All entered from time to time, but ringing for an instant. A bad headache or want of sleep caused them often to be asked to stay away, or, if they entered, to leave directly afterwards. They did not press their presence upon the sick woman, knowing only too well the nature of her malady; but contented themselves by asking after her through Madame de Mouchy, who opened the door to reply to them, keeping it scarcely ajar: This ridiculous proceeding passed before the crowd of the Luxembourg, of the Palais Royal, and of many other people who, for form's sake or for curiosity, came to inquire the news, and became common town-talk.

The danger increasing, Languet, a celebrated cure of Saint-Sulpice, who had always rendered himself assiduous, spoke of the sacraments to M. le Duc d'Orleans. The difficulty was how to enter and propose them to Madame la Duchesse de Berry. But another and greater difficulty soon appeared. It was this: the cure, like a man knowing his duty, refused to administer the sacrament, or to suffer it to be administered, while Rion or Madame de Mouchy remained in the chamber, or even in the Luxembourg! He declared this aloud before everybody, expressly in presence of M. le Duc d'Orleans, who was less shocked than embarrassed. He took the cure aside, and for a long time tried to make him give way. Seeing him inflexible, he proposed reference to the Cardinal de Noailles. The cure

immediately agreed, and promised to defer to his orders, Noailles being his bishop, provided he was allowed to explain his reasons. The affair passed, and Madame la Duchesse de Berry made confession to a Cordelier, her confessor. M. le Duc d'Orleans flattered himself, no doubt, he would find the diocesan more flexible than the cure. If he hoped so he deceived himself.

The Cardinal de Noailles arrived; M. le Duc d'Orleans took him aside with the cure, and their conversation lasted more than half an hour. As the declaration of the cure had been public, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris judged it fitting that his should be so also. As all three approached the door of the chamber, filled with company, the Cardinal de Noailles said aloud to the cure, that he had very worthily done his duty, that he expected nothing less from such a good, experienced, and enlightened man as he was; that he praised him for what he had demanded before administering the sacrament to Madame la Duchesse de Berry; that he exhorted him not to give in, or to suffer himself to be deceived upon so important a thing; and that if he wanted further authorisation he, as his bishop, diocesan, and superior, prohibited him from administering the sacraments, or allowing them to be administered, to Madame la Duchesse de Berry while Rion and Madame de Mouchy were in the chamber, or even in the Luxembourg.

It may be imagined what a stir such inevitable scandal as this made in a room so full of company; what embarrassment it caused M. le Duc d'Orleans, and what a noise it immediately made everywhere. Nobody, even the chiefs of the constitution, the mass without, enemies of the Cardinal de Noailles, the most fashionable bishops, the most distinguished women, the libertines even—not one blamed the cure or his archbishop: some because they knew the rules of the Church, and did not dare to impugn them; others, the majority, from horror of the conduct of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, and hatred drawn upon her by her pride.

Now came the question between the Regent, the Cardinal, and the cure, which should announce this determination to Madame la Duchesse de Berry, who in no way expected it, and who, having confessed, expected every moment to see the Holy Sacrament enter, and to take it. After a short colloquy urged on by the state of the patient, the Cardinal and the cure withdrew a little, while M. le Duc d'Orleans slightly opened the door and called Madame de Mouchy. Then, the door ajar, she within, he without, he told her what was in debate. La Mouchy, much astonished, still more annoyed, rode the high horse, talked of her merit, and of the affront that bigots wished to cast upon her and Madame la Duchesse de Berry, who would never suffer it or consent to it, and that she would die—in the state she was—if they had the impudence and the cruelty to tell it to her.

The conclusion was that La Mouchy undertook to announce to Madame la Duchesse de Berry the resolution that had been taken respecting the sacraments—what she added of her own may be imagined. A negative response did not fail to be quickly delivered to M. le Duc d'Orleans through the half-opened door. Coming through such a messenger, it was just the reply he might have expected. Immediately after, he repeated it to the Cardinal, and to the cure; the cure, being supported by his archbishop, contented himself with shrugging his shoulders. But the Cardinal said to M. le Duc d'Orleans that Madame de Mouchy, one of the two who ought to be sent away, was not a fit person to bring Madame la Duchesse to reason; that it was his duty to carry this message to her, and to exhort her to do her duty as a Christian shortly about to appear before God; and the Archbishop pressed the Regent to go and say so to her. It will be believed, without difficulty, that his eloquence gained nothing. This Prince feared too much his daughter, and would have been but a feeble apostle with her.

Reiterated refusals determined the Cardinal to go and speak to Madame la Duchesse de Berry, accompanied by the cure, and as he wished to set about it at once, M. le Duc d'Orleans, who did not dare to hinder him, but who feared some sudden and dangerous revolution in his daughter at the sight and at the discourses of the two pastors, conjured him to wait until preparations could be made to receive him. He went, therefore, and held another colloquy through the door with Madame de Mouchy, the success of which was equal to the other. Madame la Duchesse de Berry flew into fury, railed in unruly terms against these hypocritical humbugs, who took advantage of her state and

their calling to dishonour her by an unheard- of scandal, not in the least sparing her father for his stupidity and feebleness in allowing it. To have heard her, you would have thought that the cure and the Cardinal ought to be kicked downstairs.

M. le Duc d'Orleans returned to the ecclesiastics, looking very small, and not knowing what to do between his daughter and them. However, he said to them that she was so weak and suffering that they must put off their visit, persuading them as well as he could. The attention and anxiety of the large company which filled the room were extreme: everything was known afterwards, bit by bit, during the day.

The Cardinal de Noailles remained more than two hours with M. le Duc d'Orleans, round whom people gathered at last. The Cardinal, seeing that he could not enter the chamber without a sort of violence, much opposed to persuasion, thought it indecent and useless to wait any longer. In going away, he reiterated his orders to the cure, and begged him to watch so as not to be deceived respecting the sacraments, lest attempts were made to administer them clandestinely. He afterwards approached Madame de Saint-Simon, took her aside, related to her what had passed, and deplored with her a scandal that he had not been able to avoid. M. le Duc d'Orleans hastened to announce to his daughter the departure of the Cardinal, at which he himself was much relieved. But on leaving the chamber he was astonished to find the cure glued against the door, and still more so to hear he had taken up his post there, and meant to remain, happen what might, because he did not wish to be deceived respecting the sacraments. And, indeed, he remained there four days and four nights, except during short intervals for food and repose that he took at home, quite close to the Luxembourg, and during which his place was filled by two priests whom he left there. At last, the danger being passed, he raised the siege.

Madame la Duchesse de Berry, safely delivered of a daughter, had nothing to do but to re-establish herself; but she remained firm against the cure and the Cardinal de Noailles, neither of whom she ever pardoned. She became more and more bewitched by the two lovers, who laughed at her, and who were attached to her only for their fortune and their interest. She remained shut up without seeing M. and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, except for a few moments; no one, commencing with Madame de Saint-Simon, showed any eagerness to see her, for everybody knew what kept the door shut.

Madame la Duchesse de Berry, infinitely pained by the manner in which everybody, even the people, looked upon her malady, thought to gain a little lost ground by throwing open the gardens of the Luxembourg to the public, after having long since closed them. People were glad: they profited by the act; that was all. She made a vow that she would give herself up to religion, and dress in white—that is, devote herself to the service of the Virgin—for six months. This vow made people laugh a little.

Her illness had begun on the 26th of March, 1719, and Easter-day fell on the 9th of April. She was then quite well, but would not see a soul. A new cause of annoyance had arisen to trouble her. Rion, who saw himself so successful as the lover of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, wished to improve his position by becoming her husband. He was encouraged in this desire by his uncle, M. de Lauzun, who had also advised him to treat her with the rigour, harshness—nay, brutality, which I have already described. The maxim of M. de Lauzun was, that the Bourbons must be ill- used and treated with a high hand in order to maintain empire over them. Madame de Mouchy was as strongly in favour of this marriage as Rion. She knew she was sure of her lover, and that when he became the husband of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, all the doors which shut intimacy would be thrown down. A secret marriage accordingly took place.

This marriage gave rise to violent quarrels, and much weeping. In order to deliver herself from these annoyances, and at the same time steer clear of Easter, the Duchess resolved to go away to Meudon on Easter Monday. It was in vain that the danger was represented to her, of the air, of the movement of the coach, and of the change of place at the end of a fortnight. Nothing could make

her endure Paris any longer. She set out, therefore, followed by Rion and the majority of her ladies and her household.

M. le Duc d'Orleans informed me then of the fixed design of Madame la Duchesse de Berry to declare the secret marriage she had just made with Rion. Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans was at Montmartre for a few days, and we were walking in the little garden of her apartments. The marriage did not surprise me much, knowing the strength of her passion, her fear of the devil, and the scandal which had just happened. But I was astonished, to the last degree, at this furious desire to declare the marriage, in a person so superbly proud.

M. le Duc d'Orleans dilated upon his troubles, his anger, that of Madame (who wished to proceed to the most violent extremities), and the great resolve of Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans. Fortunately the majority of the officers destined to serve against Spain, (war with that country had just been declared) were leaving every day, and Rion had remained solely on account of the illness of Madame la Duchesse de Berry, M. le Duc d'Orleans thought the shortest plan would be to encourage hope by delay, in forcing Rion to depart, flattering himself that the declaration would be put off much more easily in his absence than in his presence. I strongly approved this idea, and on the morrow, Rion received at Meudon a curt and positive order to depart at once and join his regiment in the army of the Duc de Berwick. Madame la Duchesse de Berry was all the more outraged, because she knew the cause of this order, and consequently felt her inability to hinder its execution. Rion on his side did not dare to disobey it. He set out, therefore; and M. le Duc d'Orleans, who had not yet been to Meudon, remained several days without going there.

Father and daughter feared each other, and this departure had not put them on better terms. She had told him, and repeated it, that she was a rich widow, mistress of her own actions, independent of him; had flown into a fury, and terribly abused M. le Duc d'Orleans when he tried to remonstrate with her. He had received much rough handling from her at the Luxembourg when she was better; it was the same at Meudon during the few visits he paid her there. She wished to declare her marriage; and all the art, intellect, gentleness, anger, menace, prayers, and interest of M. le Duc d'Orleans barely sufficed to make her consent to a brief delay.

If Madame had been listened to, the affair would have been finished before the journey to Meudon; for M. le Duc d'Orleans would have thrown Rion out of the windows of the Luxembourg!

The premature journey to Meudon, and quarrels so warm, were not calculated to re-establish a person just returned from the gates of death. The extreme desire she had to hide her state from the public, and to conceal the terms on which she was with her father (for the rarity of his visits to her began to be remarked), induced her to give a supper to him on the terrace of Meudon about eight o'clock one evening. In vain the danger was represented to her of the cool evening air so soon after an illness such as she had just suffered from, and which had left her health still tottering. It was specially on this account that she stuck more obstinately to her supper on the terrace, thinking that it would take away all suspicion she had been confined, and induce the belief that she was on the same terms as ever with M. le Duc d'Orleans, though the uncommon rarity of his visits to her had been remarked.

This supper in the open air did not succeed. The same night she was taken ill. She was attacked by accidents, caused by the state in which she still was, and by an irregular fever, that the opposition she met with respecting the declaration of her marriage did not contribute to diminish. She grew disgusted with Meudon, like people ill in body and mind, who in their grief attribute everything to the air and the place. She was annoyed at the few visits she received from M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans,-her pride, however, suffering more than her tenderness.

In despite of all reason, nothing could hinder her from changing her abode. She was transferred from Meudon to the Muette, wrapped up in sheets, and in a large coach, on Sunday, the 14th of May, 1719. Arrived so near Paris, she hoped M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans would come and see her more frequently, if only for form's sake.

This journey was painful by the sufferings it caused her, added to those she already had, which no remedies could appease, except for short intervals, and which became very violent. Her illness augmented; but hopes and fears sustained her until the commencement of July. During all this time her desire to declare her marriage weakened, and M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans, as well as Madame, who passed the summer at Saint-Cloud, came more frequently to see her. The month of July became more menacing because of the augmentation of pain and fever. These ills increased so much, in fact, that, by the 14th of July, fears for her life began to be felt.

The night of the 14th was so stormy, that M. le Duc d'Orleans was sent to at the Palais Royal, and awakened. At the same time Madame de Pons wrote to Madame de Saint-Simon, pressing her to come and establish herself at La Muette. Madame de Saint-Simon, although she made a point of scarcely ever sleeping under the same roof as Madame la Duchesse de Berry (for reasons which need no further explanation than those already given), complied at once with this request, and took up her quarters from this time at La Muette.

Upon arriving, she found the danger great. Madame la Duchesse de Berry had been bled in the arm and in the foot on the 10th, and her confessor had been sent for. But the malady still went on increasing. As the pain which had so long afflicted her could not induce her to follow a regimen necessary for her condition, or to think of a future state, relations and doctors were at last obliged to speak a language to her, not used towards princesses, except at the most urgent extremity. This, at last, had its effect. She submitted to the medical treatment prescribed for her, and received the sacrament with open doors, speaking to those present upon her life and upon her state, but like a queen in both instances. After this sight was over, alone with her familiars, she applauded herself for the firmness she had displayed, asked them if she had not spoken well, and if she was not dying with greatness and courage.

A day or two after, she wished to receive Our Lord once more. She received, accordingly, and as it appeared, with much piety, quite differently from the first time.

At the extremity to which she had arrived, the doctors knew not what to do; everybody was tried. An elixir was spoken of, discovered by a certain Garus, which made much stir just then, and the secret of which the King has since bought. Garus was sent for and soon arrived. He found Madame la Duchesse de Berry so ill that he would answer for nothing. His remedy was given, and succeeded beyond all hopes. Nothing remained but to continue it. Above all things, Garus had begged that nothing should, on any account, be given to Madame la Duchesse de Berry except by him, and this had been most expressly commanded by M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans. Madame la Duchesse de Berry continued to be more and more relieved and so restored, that Chirac, her regular doctor, began to fear for his reputation, and taking the opportunity when Garus was asleep upon a sofa, presented, with impetuosity, a purgative to Madame la Duchesse de Berry, and made her swallow it without saying a word to anybody, the two nurses standing by, the only persons present, not daring to oppose him.

The audacity of this was as complete as its villainy, for M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans were close at hand in the salon. From this moment to that in which the patient fell into a state worse than that from which the elixir had drawn her, there was scarcely an interval. Garus was awaked and called. Seeing this disorder, he cried that a purgative had been given, and whatever it might be, it was poison in the state to which the princess was now reduced. He wished to depart, he was detained, he was taken to Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans. Then followed a great uproar, cries from Garus, impudence and unequalled hardihood of Chirac, in defending what he had done.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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