Early French Prisons

LE GRAND AND LE PETIT CHÂTELETS
VINCENNES—THE BASTILE—LOCHES
THE GALLEYS
REVOLUTIONARY PRISONS

by

MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS
Late Inspector of Prisons in Great Britain

Author of
"The Mysteries of Police and Crime"
"Fifty Years of Public Service," etc.

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The History and Romance of Crime.
Early French Prisons

The History and Romance of Crime

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO THE PRESENT DAY

THE GROLIER SOCIETY
LONDON

An Incident During the Communal Revolts of the Twelfth Century

A noble being strangled in his castle by one of the men of the commune (town) in the twelfth century when the villages at the foot of the castles revolted and wrested charters from their lords, often peacefully but more frequently by bloodshed and brutal practices.

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INTRODUCTION

The judicial administration of France had its origin in the Feudal System. The great nobles ruled their estates side by side with, and not under, the King. With him the great barons exercised “high” justice, extending to life and limb. The seigneurs and great clerics dispensed “middle” justice and imposed certain corporal penalties, while the power of “low” justice, extending only to the *amende* and imprisonment, was wielded by smaller jurisdictions.

The whole history of France is summed up in the persistent effort of the King to establish an absolute monarchy, and three centuries were passed in a struggle between nobles, parliaments and the eventually supreme ruler. Each jurisdiction was supported by various methods of enforcing its authority: All, however, had their prisons, which served many purposes. The prison was first of all a place of detention and durance where people deemed dangerous might be kept out of the way of doing harm and law-breakers could be called to account for their misdeeds. Accused persons were in it held safely until they could be arraigned before the tribunals, and after conviction by legal process were sentenced to the various penalties in force.

The prison was *de facto* the high road to the scaffold on which the condemned suffered the extreme penalty by one or another of the forms of capital punishment, and death was dealt out indifferently by decapitation, the noose, the stake or the wheel. Too often where proof was weak or wanting, torture was called in to assist in extorting confession of guilt, and again, the same hideous practice was applied to the convicted, either to aggravate their pains or to compel the betrayal of suspected confederates and accomplices. The prison reflected every phase of passing criminality and was the constant home of wrong-doers of all categories, heinous and venial. Offenders against the common law met their just retribution. Many thousands were committed for sins political and non-criminal, the victims of an arbitrary monarch and his high-handed, irresponsible ministers.

The prison was the King's castle, his stronghold for the coercion and safe-keeping of all who conspired against his person or threatened his peace. It was a social reformatory in which he disciplined the dissolute and the wastrel, the loose-livers of both sexes, who were thus obliged to run straight and kept out of mischief by the stringent curtailment of their liberty. The prison, last of all, played into the hands of the rich against the poor, active champion of the commercial code, taking the side of creditors by holding all debtors fast until they could satisfy the legal, and at times illegal demands made upon them.

Various types of prisons were to be found in France, the simpler kind being gradually enlarged and extended, and more and more constantly utilised as time passed and society became more complex. All had common features and exercised similar discipline. All were of solid construction, relying upon bolts and bars, high walls and hard-hearted, ruthless jailers. The prison régime was alike in all; commonly starvation, squalor, the sickness of hope deferred, close confinement protracted to the extreme limits of human endurance in dark dungeons, poisonous to health and inducing mental breakdown. In all prisons, penalties followed the same grievous lines. Culprits were subjected to degradation moral and physical, to the exposure of the *carcan* and pillory. They made public reparation by the *amende honorable*, were flogged, mutilated, branded and tortured.

Prisons were to be met with throughout the length and breadth of France. The capital had many; every provincial city possessed one or more. In Paris the principal prisons were the two Châtelets, the gaols and, as we should say to-day, the police headquarters of the Provost or chief magistrate of the city. For-l'Évêque was the Bishops' court; the Conciergerie, the guardroom of the King's palace, kept by the *concierge*, porter or janitor, really the mayor and custodian of the royal residence; in the Temple the powerful and arrogant military order of the Knights Templars had its seat.

The reigning sovereign relied upon the Bastile, at first merely a rampart against invasion and rebellion, but presently exalted into the King's prison-house, the royal gaol and penitentiary. He had also the donjon of Vincennes, which was first a place of defensive usefulness and next a place of restraint and coercion for State offenders. Other prisons came into existence later: the Madelonnettes, St. Pélagie, Bicêtre, the Salpêtrière and St. Lazare.

All these have historic interest more or less pronounced and notable. All in their time were the scenes of strange, often terrible episodes and events. All serve to illustrate various curious epochs of the world's history, but mark more especially the rise, progress, aggrandisement and decadence and final fall of the French monarchy.

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Let us consider the prisons of Old France in the order of their antiquity, their size and their general importance in French history.

First of all the two Châtelets, the greater and less, Le Grand and Le Petit Châtelet, of which the last named was probably the earliest in date of erection. Antiquarians refer the Petit Châtelet to the Roman period and state that its original use was to guard the entrance to Paris when the city was limited to that small island in the Seine which was the nucleus of the great capital of France. This fortress and bridge-head was besieged and destroyed by the Normans but was subsequently rebuilt; and it is mentioned in a deed dated 1222 in which the king, Philip Augustus, took over the rights of justice, at a price, from the Bishop of Paris. It stood then on the south bank of the Seine at the far end of the bridge long afterwards known as the Petit Pont. Both bridge and castle were swept away in 1296 by an inundation and half a century elapsed before they were restored on such a firm basis as to resist any future overflowing of the Seine. At this date its rôle as a fortress appears to have ceased and it was appropriated by Charles V of France to serve as a prison and to overawe the students of the Quartier Latin. Hugues Aubriot, the same Provost of Paris who built the Bastile, constructed several cells between the pillars supporting the Petit Châtelet and employed them for the confinement of turbulent scholars of the university.

The Grand Châtelet was situated on the opposite, or northern bank of the river, facing that side of the island of the Cité, or the far end of the Pont au Change on the same site as the present Place du Châtelet. Like its smaller namesake it was also thought to have been a bridge-head or river-gate, although this is based on no authentic record. The first definite mention of

the Grand Châtelet is in the reign of Philip Augustus after he created the courts of justice and headquarters of the municipality of Paris.

The Chapel and Confraternity of Notaries was established here in 1270. The jurisdiction of the Provost of Paris embraced all the functions of the police of later days. He was responsible for the good order and security of the city; he checked disturbances and called the riotous and disorderly to strict account. He was all powerful; all manner of offenders were haled before the tribunals over which he presided with fifty-six associate judges and assistants. The Châtelet owned a King's Procurator and four King's Counsellors, a chief clerk, many receivers, bailiffs, ushers, gaolers and sixty sworn special experts, a surgeon and his assistants, including a mid-wife or accoucheuse, and 220 *sergents à cheval*, or outdoor officers and patrols, over whom the Procurator's authority was supreme. The Procurator was also the guardian and champion of the helpless and oppressed, of deserted and neglected children and ill-used wives; he regulated the markets and supervised the guilds and corporations of trades and their operations, exposed frauds in buying and selling and saw that accurate weights and measures were employed in merchandising.

The prisons of the two Châtelets were dark, gruesome receptacles. Contemporary prints preserve the grim features of the Petit Châtelet, a square, massive building of stone pierced with a few loopholes in its towers, a drawbridge with a portcullis giving access to the bridge. The Grand Châtelet was of more imposing architecture, with an elevated façade capped by a flat roof and having many "pepper pot" towers at the angles. The cells and chambers within were dark, dirty, ill-ventilated dens. Air was admitted only from above and in such insufficient quantity that the prisoners were in constant danger of suffocation, while the space was far too limited to accommodate the numbers confined. The titles given to various parts of the interior of the Grand Châtelet will serve to illustrate the character of the accommodation.

There was the *Berceau* or cradle, so called from its arched roof; the *Boucherie*, with obvious derivation; the *chaîne* room, otherwise *chêne*, from the fetters used or the oak beams built into it; the *Fin d'Aise* or "end of ease," akin to the "Little Ease" of old London's Newgate, a horrible and putrescent pigsty, described as full of filth and over-run with reptiles and

with air so poisonous that a candle would not remain alight in it. A chamber especially appropriated to females was styled *La Grieche*, an old French epithet for a shrew or vixen; other cells are known as *La Gloriette*, *La Barbarie*, *La Barcane* or *Barbacane*, lighted by a small grating in the roof. The Châtelet had its deep-down, underground dungeon, the familiar *oubliettes* of every mediæval castle and monastery, called also *in pace* because the hapless inmates were thrown into them to be forgotten and left to perish of hunger and anguish, but "in peace." The worst of these at the Châtelet must have been *La Fosse*, the bottom of which was knee deep in water, so that the prisoner was constantly soaked and it was necessary to stand erect to escape drowning; here death soon brought relief, for "none survived *La Fosse* for more than fifteen days."

Monstrous as it must appear, rent on a fixed scale was extorted for residence in these several apartments. These were in the so-called "honest" prisons. The *Chaîne* room, mentioned above, *La Beauvoir*, *La Motte* and *La Salle* cost each individual four deniers (the twelfth part of a sou) for the room and two for a bed. In *La Boucherie* and *Grieche* it was two deniers for the room, but only one denier for a bed of straw or reeds. Even in *La Fosse* and the *oubliettes* payment was exacted, presumably in advance. Some light is thrown by the ancient chronicles upon the prison system that obtained within the Châtelet. The first principle was recognised that it was a place of detention only and not for the maltreatment of its involuntary guests. Rules were made by the parliaments, the chief juridical authorities of Paris, to soften the lot of the prisoners, to keep order amongst them and protect them from the cupidity of their gaolers. The governor was permitted to charge gaol fees, but the scale was strictly regulated and depended upon the status and condition of the individuals committed. Thus a count or countess paid ten livres (about fifty francs), a knight banneret was charged twenty sous, a Jew or Jewess half that amount. Prisoners who lay on the straw paid one sou. For half a bed the price was three sous and for the privilege of sleeping alone, five sous. The latest arrivals were obliged to sweep the floors and keep the prison rooms clean. It was ordered that the officials should see that the bread issued was of good quality and of the proper weight, a full pound and a half per head. The officials were to visit the prisons at least once a week and receive the complaints made by prisoners out of hearing of their gaolers. The hospitals were to be regularly visited and attention given to the

sick. Various charities existed to improve the prison diet: the drapers on their fête day issued bread, meat and wine; the watchmakers gave a dinner on Easter day when food was seized and forfeited and a portion was issued to the pauper prisoners.

In all this the little Châtelet served as an annex to the larger prison. During their lengthened existence both prisons witnessed many atrocities and were disgraced by many dark deeds. One of the most frightful episodes was that following the blood-thirsty feuds between the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons in the early years of the fifteenth century. These two political parties fought for supreme authority in the city of Paris, which was long torn by their dissensions. The Armagnacs held the Bastile but were dispossessed of it by the Bourguignons, who were guilty of the most terrible excesses. They slaughtered five hundred and twenty of their foes and swept the survivors wholesale into the Châtelet and the "threshold of the prison became the scaffold of 1,500 unfortunate victims." The Bourguignons were not satisfied and besieged the place in due form; for the imprisoned Armagnacs organised a defense and threw up a barricade upon the north side of the fortress, where they held out stoutly. The assailants at last made a determined attack with scaling ladders, by which they surmounted the walls sixty feet high, and a fierce and prolonged conflict ensued. When the attack was failing the Bourguignons set fire to the prison and fought their way in, driving the besieged before them. Many of the Armagnacs sought to escape the flames by flinging themselves over the walls and were caught upon the pikes of the Bourguignons "who finished them with axe and sword." Among the victims were many persons of quality, two cardinals, several bishops, officers of rank, magistrates and respectable citizens.

The garrison of the Châtelet in those early days was entrusted to the archers of the provost's guard, the little Châtelet being the provost's official residence. The guard was frequently defied by the turbulent population and especially by the scholars of the University of Paris, an institution under the ecclesiastical authority and very jealous of interference by the secular arm. One provost in the fourteenth century, having caught a scholar in the act of stealing upon the highway, forthwith hanged him, whereupon the clergy of Paris went in procession to the Châtelet and denounced the provost. The King sided with them and the chief magistrate of the city was sacrificed to their clamor. Another provost, who hanged two scholars for robbery, was

degraded from his office, led to the gallows and compelled to take down and kiss the corpses of the men he had executed. The provosts themselves were sometimes unfaithful to their trust. One of them in the reign of Philip the Long, by name Henri Chaperel, made a bargain with a wealthy citizen who was in custody under sentence of death. The condemned man was allowed to escape and a friendless and obscure prisoner hanged in his place. It is interesting to note, however, that this Henri Chaperel finished on the gallows as did another provost, Hugues de Cruzy, who was caught in dishonest traffic with his prisoners. Here the King himself had his share in the proceeds. A famous brigand and highwayman of noble birth, Jourdain de Lisle, the chief of a great band of robbers, bought the protection of the provost, and the Châtelet refused to take cognizance of his eight crimes—any one of which deserved an ignominious death. It was necessary to appoint a new provost before justice could be meted out to Jourdain de Lisle, who was at last tied to the tail of a horse and dragged through the streets of Paris to the public gallows.

In the constant warfare between the provost and the people the latter did not hesitate to attack the prison fortress of the Châtelet. In 1320 a body of insurgents collected under the leadership of two apostate priests who promised to meet them across the seas and conquer the Holy Land. When some of their number were arrested and thrown into the Châtelet, the rest marched upon the prison, bent on rescue, and, breaking in, effected a general gaol delivery. This was not the only occasion in which the Châtelet lost those committed to its safe-keeping. In the latter end of the sixteenth century the provost was one Hugues de Bourgueil, a hunch-back with a beautiful wife. Among his prisoners was a young Italian, named Gonsalvi, who, on the strength of his nationality, gained the goodwill of Catherine de Medicis, the Queen Mother. The Queen commended him to the provost, who lodged him in his own house, and Gonsalvi repaid this kindness by running away with de Bourgueil's wife. Madame de Bourgueil, on the eve of her elopement, gained possession of the prison keys and released the whole of the three hundred prisoners in custody, thus diverting the attention from her own escapade. The provost, preferring his duty to his wife, turned out with horse and foot, and pursued and recaptured the fugitive prisoners, while Madame de Bourgueil and her lover were allowed to go their own

way. After this affair the King moved the provost's residence from the Châtelet to the Hôtel de Hercule.

References are found in the earlier records of the various prisoners confined in the Châtelet. One of the earliest is a list of Jews imprisoned for reasons not given. But protection was also afforded to this much wronged race, and once, towards the end of the fourteenth century, when the populace rose to rob and slaughter the Jews, asylum was given to the unfortunates by opening to them the gates of the Châtelet. About the same time a Spanish Jew and an habitual thief, one Salmon of Barcelona, were taken to the Châtelet and condemned to be hanged by the heels between two large dogs. Salmon, to save himself, offered to turn Christian, and was duly baptised, the gaoler's wife being his godmother. Nevertheless, within a week he was hanged "like a Christian" (*chrétiennement*), under his baptismal name of Nicholas.

The Jews themselves resented the apostasy of a co-religionist and it is recorded that four were detained in the Châtelet for having attacked and maltreated Salmon for espousing Christianity. For this they were condemned to be flogged at all the street corners on four successive Sundays; but when a part of the punishment had been inflicted they were allowed to buy off the rest by a payment of 18,000 francs in gold. The money was applied to the rebuilding of the Petit Pont. Prisoners of war were confined there. Eleven gentlemen accused of assassination were "long detained" in the Châtelet and in the end executed. It continually received sorcerers and magicians in the days when many were accused of commerce with the Devil. Idle vagabonds who would not work were lodged in it.

At this period Paris and the provinces were terrorised by bands of brigands. Some of the chief leaders were captured and carried to the Châtelet, where they suffered the extreme penalty. The crime of poisoning, always so much in evidence in French criminal annals, was early recorded at the Châtelet. In 1390 payment was authorised for three mounted sergeants of police who escorted from the prison at Angers and Le Mans to the Châtelet, two priests charged with having thrown poison into the wells, fountains and rivers of the neighborhood. One Honoré Paulard, a bourgeois of Paris, was in 1402 thrown into the *Fin d'Aise* dungeon of the Châtelet for having poisoned his father, mother, two sisters and three other persons in order to succeed to

their inheritance. Out of consideration for his family connections he was not publicly executed but left to the tender mercies of the *Fin d'Aise*, where he died at the end of a month. The procureur of parliament was condemned to death with his wife Ysabelete, a prisoner in the Châtelet, whose former husband, also a procureur, they were suspected of having poisoned. On no better evidence than suspicion they were both sentenced to death—the husband to be hanged and the wife burned alive. Offenders of other categories were brought to the Châtelet. A superintendent of finances, prototype of Fouquet, arrested by the Provost Pierre des Fessarts, and convicted of embezzlement, met his fate in the Châtelet. Strange to say, Des Fessarts himself was arrested four years later and suffered on the same charge. Great numbers of robbers taken red-handed were imprisoned—at one time two hundred thieves, murderers and highwaymen (*épieurs de grand chemin*). An auditor of the Palace was condemned to make the *amende honorable* in effigy; a figure of his body in wax being shown at the door of the chapel and then dragged to the pillory to be publicly exposed. Clement Marot, the renowned poet, was committed to the Châtelet at the instance of the beautiful Diane de Poitiers for continually inditing fulsome verses in her praise. Weary at last of her contemptuous silence he penned a bitter satire which Diane resented by accusing him of Lutheranism and of eating bacon in Lent. Marot's confinement in the Châtelet inspired his famous poem *L'Enfer*, wherein he compared the Châtelet to the infernal regions and cursed the whole French penal system—prisoners, judges, lawyers and the cruelties of the "question."

Never from the advent of the Reformation did Protestants find much favor in France. In 1557 four hundred Huguenots assembled for service in a house of the Rue St. Jacques and were attacked on leaving it by a number of the neighbors. They fought in self-defense and many made good their escape, but the remainder—one hundred and twenty persons, several among them being ladies of the Court—were arrested by the *lieutenant criminel* and carried to the Châtelet. They were accused of infamous conduct and although they complained to the King they were sent to trial, and within a fortnight nearly all the number were burnt at the stake. Another story runs that the *lieutenant criminel* forced his way into a house in the Marais where a number of Huguenots were at table. They fled, but the hotel keeper was arrested and charged with having supplied meat in the daily bill of fare on a

Friday. For this he was conducted to the Châtelet with his wife and children, a larded capon being carried before them to hold them up to the derision of the bystanders. The incident ended seriously, for the wretched inn-keeper was thrown into a dungeon and died there in misery.

Precedence has been given to the two Châtelets in the list of ancient prisons in Paris, but no doubt the Conciergerie runs them close in point of date and was equally formidable. It originally was part of the Royal Palace of the old Kings of France and still preserves as to site, and in some respects as to form, in the Palais de Justice one of the most interesting monuments in modern Paris. “There survives a sense of suffocation in these buildings,” writes Philarète Chasles. “Here are the oldest dungeons of France. Paris had scarcely begun when they were first opened.” “These towers,” says another Frenchman, “the courtyard and the dim passage along which prisoners are still admitted, have tears in their very aspect.” One of the greatest tragedies in history was played out in the Conciergerie almost in our own days, thus bringing down the sad record of bitter sufferings inflicted by man upon man from the Dark Ages to the day of our much vaunted enlightenment. The Conciergerie was the last resting place, before execution, of the hapless Queen Marie Antoinette.

When Louis IX, commonly called Saint Louis, rebuilt his palace in the thirteenth century he constructed also his dungeons hard by. The *concierge* was trusted by the kings with the safe-keeping of their enemies and was the governor of the royal prison. In 1348 he took the title of *bailli* and the office lasted, with its wide powers often sadly abused, until the collapse of the monarchical régime. A portion of the original Conciergerie as built in the garden of Concierge is still extant. Three of the five old towers, circular in shape and with pepper pot roofs, are standing. Of the first, that of Queen Blanche was pulled down in 1853 and that of the Inquisition in 1871. The three now remaining are Cæsar’s Tower, where the reception ward is situated on the very spot where Damiens, the attempted regicide of Louis XV, was interrogated while strapped to the floor; the tower of Silver, the actual residence of “Reine Blanche” and the visiting room where legal advisers confer with their clients among the accused prisoners; and lastly the Bon Bec tower, once the torture chamber and now the hospital and dispensary of the prison.

The cells and dungeons of the Conciergerie, some of which might be seen and inspected as late as 1835, were horrible beyond belief. Clement Marot said of it in his verse that it was impossible to conceive a place that more nearly approached a hell upon earth. The loathsomeness of its underground receptacles was inconceivable. It contained some of the worst specimens of the ill-famed *oubliettes*. An attempt has been made by some modern writers to deny the existence of these *oubliettes*, but all doubt was removed by discoveries revealed when opening the foundations of the Bon Bec tower. Two subterranean pits were found below the ordinary level of the river Seine and the remains of sharpened iron points protruded from their walls obviously intended to catch the bodies and tear the flesh of those flung into these cavernous depths. Certain of these dungeons were close to the royal kitchens and were long preserved. They are still remembered by the quaint name of the mousetraps (or *souricières*) in which the inmates were caught and kept *au secret*, entirely separate and unable to communicate with a single soul but their immediate guardians and gaolers.

The torture chamber and the whole paraphernalia for inflicting the "question" were part and parcel of every ancient prison. But the most complete and perfect methods were to be found in the Conciergerie. As a rule, therefore, in the most heinous cases, when the most shocking crimes were under investigation, the accused was relegated to the Conciergerie to undergo treatment by torture. It was so in the case of Ravaillac who murdered Henry IV; also the Marchioness of Brinvilliers and the poisoners; and yet again, of Damiens who attempted the life of Louis XV, and many more: to whom detailed references will be found in later pages.

The For-l'Évêque, the Bishop's prison, was situated in the rue St. Germain-l'Auxerrois, and is described in similar terms as the foregoing: "dark, unwholesome and over-crowded." In the court or principal yard, thirty feet long by eighteen feet wide, some four or five hundred prisoners were constantly confined. The outer walls were of such a height as to forbid the circulation of fresh air and there was not enough to breathe. The cells were more dog-holes than human habitations. In some only six feet square, five prisoners were often lodged at one and the same time. Others were too low in the ceiling for a man to stand upright and few had anything but borrowed light from the yard. Many cells were below the ground level and that of the river bed, so that water filtered in through the arches all the year round, and

even in the height of summer the only ventilation was by a slight slit in the door three inches wide. “To pass by an open cell door one felt as if smitten by fire from within,” says a contemporary writer. Access to these cells was by dark, narrow galleries. For long years the whole prison was in such a state of dilapidation that ruin and collapse were imminent.

Later For-l’Évêque received insolvent debtors—those against whom *lettres de cachet* were issued, and actors who were evil livers. It was the curious custom to set these last free for a few hours nightly in order to play their parts at the theatres; but they were still in the custody of the officer of the watch and were returned to gaol after the performance. Many minor offenders guilty of small infractions of the law, found lodging in the For-l’Évêque. Side by side with thieves and roysterers were dishonest usurers who lent trifling sums. All jurisdictions, all authorities could commit to the For-l’Évêque, the judges of inferior tribunals, ministers of state, auditors, grand seigneurs. The prison régime varied for this various population, but poor fare and poorer lodgings were the fate of the larger number. Those who could pay found chambers more comfortable, decently furnished, and palatable food. Order was not always maintained. More than once mutinies broke out, generally on account of the villainous ration of bread issued, and it was often found necessary to fire upon the prisoners to subdue them.

When the Knights Templars received permission to settle in Paris in the twelfth century, they gradually consolidated their power in the Marais, the marshy ground to the eastward of the Seine, and there laid the foundations of a great stronghold on which the Temple prison was a prominent feature. The knights wielded sovereign power with the rights of high justice and the very kings of France themselves bent before them. At length the arrogance of the order brought it the bitter hostility of Philippe le Bel who, in 1307, broke the power of the order in France. They were pursued and persecuted. Their Grand Master was tortured and executed while the King administered their estate. The prison of the Temple with its great towers and wide encircling walls became a state prison, the forerunner of Vincennes and the Bastile. It received, as a rule, the most illustrious prisoners only, dukes and counts and sovereign lords, and in the Revolutionary period it gained baleful distinction as the condemned cell, so to speak, of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The prison of Bicêtre, originally a bishop's residence and then successively a house of detention for sturdy beggars and a lunatic asylum, was first built at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It was owned by John, Bishop of Winchester in England, and its name was a corruption of the word Winchester—"Vinchester" and so "Bichestre" and, eventually, "Bicêtre." It was confiscated to the King in the fourteenth century and Charles VI dated his letters from that castle. It fell into a ruinous state in the following years and nothing was done to it until it was rebuilt by Louis XIII as a hospital for invalid soldiers and became, with the Salpêtrière, the abode of the paupers who so largely infested Paris. The hospital branch of the prison was used for the treatment of certain discreditable disorders, sufferers from which were regularly flogged at the time of their treatment by the surgeons. An old writer stigmatised the prison as a terrible ulcer that no one dared look at and which poisoned the air for four hundred yards around. Bicêtre was the home for all vagabonds and masterless men, the sturdy beggars who demanded alms sword in hand, and soldiers who, when their pay was in arrears, robbed upon the highway. Epileptics and the supposed mentally diseased, whether they were actually proved so or not, were committed to Bicêtre and after reception soon degenerated into imbeciles and raging lunatics. The terrors of underground Bicêtre have been graphically described by Masers-Latude, who had personal experience of them. This man, Danry or Latude, has been called a fictitious character, but the memoirs attributed to him are full of realism and cannot be entirely neglected. He says of Bicêtre:

"In wet weather or when it thawed in winter, water streamed from all parts of our cell. I was crippled with rheumatism and the pains were such that I was sometimes whole weeks without getting up. The window-sill guarded by an iron grating gave on to a corridor, the wall of which was placed exactly opposite at a height of ten feet. A glimmer of light came through this aperture and was accompanied by snow and rain. I had neither fire nor artificial light and prison rags were my only clothing. To quench my thirst I sucked morsels of ice broken off with the heel of my wooden shoe. If I stopped up the window I was nearly choked by the effluvium from the cellars. Insects stung me in the eyes. I had always a bad taste in my mouth and my lungs were horribly oppressed. I was detained in that cell for thirty-eight months enduring the pangs of hunger, cold and damp. I was attacked by scurvy and was presently unable to sit or rise. In ten days my legs and

thighs were swollen to twice their ordinary size. My body turned black. My teeth loosened in their sockets and I could no longer masticate. I could not speak and was thought to be dead. Then the surgeon came, and seeing my state ordered me to be removed to the infirmary."

An early victim of Bicêtre was the Protestant Frenchman, Salomon de Caus, who had lived much in England and Germany and had already, at the age of twenty, gained repute as an architect, painter and engineer. One of his inventions was an apparatus for forcing up water by a steam fountain; and that eminent scientist, Arago, declares that De Caus preceded Watt as an inventor of steam mechanisms. It was De Caus's misfortune to fall desperately in love with the notorious Marion Delorme. When his attentions became too demonstrative this fiendish creature applied for a *lettre de cachet* from Richelieu. De Caus was invited to call upon the Cardinal, whom he startled with his marvellous schemes. Richelieu thought himself in the presence of a madman and forthwith ordered De Caus to Bicêtre. Two years later Marion Delorme visited Bicêtre and was recognised by De Caus as she passed his cell. He called upon her piteously by name, and her companion, the English Marquis of Worcester, asked if she knew him, but she repudiated the acquaintance. Lord Worcester was, however, attracted by the man and his inventions, and afterwards privately visited him, giving his opinion later that a great genius had run to waste in this mad-house.

Bicêtre was subsequently associated with the galleys and was starting point of the chain of convicts directed upon the arsenals of Toulon, Rochefort, Lorient and Brest. A full account of these modern prisons is reserved for a later chapter.

The prison of Sainte Pélagie was founded in the middle of the seventeenth century by a charitable lady, Marie l'Hermite, in the faubourg Sainte Marcel, as a refuge for ill-conducted women, those who came voluntarily and those who were committed by dissatisfied fathers or husbands. It became, subsequently, a debtors' prison. The Madelonnettes were established about the same time and for the same purpose, by a wine merchant, Robert Montri, devoted to good works. The prison of St. Lazare, to-day the great female prison of Paris, appears to have been originally a hospital for lepers, and was at that time governed by the ecclesiastical authority. It was the home of various communities, till in 1630 the lepers

disappeared, and it became a kind of seminary or place of detention for weak-minded persons and youthful members of good position whose families desired to subject them to discipline and restraint. The distinction between St. Lazare and the Bastile was well described by a writer who said, “If I had been a prisoner in the Bastile I should on release have taken my place among *genres de bien* (persons of good social position) but on leaving Lazare I should have ranked with the *mauvais sujets* (ne’er do weels).” A good deal remains to be said about St. Lazare in its modern aspects.

CHAPTER II
STRUGGLE WITH THE SOVEREIGN

Provincial prisons—Loches, in Touraine, still standing—Favorite gaol of Louis XI—The iron cage—Cardinal La Balue, the Duc d'Alençon, Comines, the Bishops—Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, and his mournful inscriptions—Diane de Poitiers and her father—Mont St. Michel—Louis Napoleon—Count St. Pol—Strongholds of Touraine—Catherine de Medicis—Massacre of St Bartholomew—Murder of Duc de Guise—Chambord—Amboise—Angers—Pignerol—Exiles and the Isle St. Marguerite.

The early history of France is made up of the continuous struggle between the sovereign and the people. The power of the king, though constantly opposed by the great vassals and feudal lords, steadily grew and gained strength. The state was meanwhile torn with dissensions and passed through many succeeding periods of anarchy and great disorders. The king's power was repeatedly challenged by rivals and pretenders. It was weakened, and at times eclipsed, but in the long run it always triumphed. The king always vindicated his right to the supreme authority and, when he could, ruled arbitrarily and imperiously, backed and supported by attributes of autocracy which gradually overcame all opposition and finally established a despotic absolutism.

The principal prisons of France were royal institutions. Two in particular, the chief and most celebrated, Vincennes and the Bastile, were seated in the capital. With these I shall deal presently at considerable length. Many others, provincial strongholds and castles, were little less conspicuous and mostly of evil reputation. I shall deal with those first.

Loches in the Touraine, some twenty-five miles from Tours, will go down in history as one of the most famous, or more exactly, infamous castles in mediæval France. It was long a favored royal palace, a popular residence with the Plantagenet and other kings, but degenerated at length under Louis XI into a cruel and hideous gaol. It stands to-day in elevated isolation dominating a flat, verdant country, just as the well-known Mont St. Michel rises above the sands on the Normandy coast. The most prominent object is the colossal white donjon, or central keep, esteemed the finest of its kind in

France, said to have been erected by Fulk Nerra, the celebrated "Black Count," Count of Anjou in the eleventh century. It is surrounded by a congeries of massive buildings of later date. Just below it are the round towers of the Martelet, dating from Louis XI, who placed within them the terrible dungeons he invariably kept filled. At the other end of the long lofty plateau is another tower, that of Agnes Sorel, the personage whose influence over Charles VII, although wrongly acquired, was always exercised for good, and whose earnest patriotism inspired him to strenuous attempts to recover France from its English invaders. Historians have conceded to her a place far above the many kings' mistresses who have reigned upon the left hand of the monarchs of France. Agnes was known as the lady of "Beauté-sur-Marne," "a beauty in character as well as in aspect," and is said to have been poisoned at Junièges. She was buried at Loches with the inscription, still legible, "A sweet and simple dove whiter than swans, redder than the flame." The face, still distinguishable, preserves the "loveliness of flowers in spring." After the death of Charles VII, the priests of Saint-Ours desired to expel this tomb. But Louis XI was now on the throne. He had not hesitated to insult Agnes Sorel while living, upbraiding her openly and even, one day at court, striking her in the face with his glove, but he would only grant their request on condition that they surrender the many rich gifts bestowed upon them at her hands.

It is, however, in its character as a royal gaol and horrible prison house that Loches concerns us. Louis XI, saturnine and vindictive, found it exactly suited to his purpose for the infliction of those barbarous and inhuman penalties upon those who had offended him, that must ever disgrace his name. The great donjon, already mentioned, built by Fulk Nerra, the "Black Count," had already been used by him as a prison and the rooms occupied by the Scottish Guard are still to be seen. The new tower at the northwest angle of the fortress was the work of Louis and on the ground floor level is the torture chamber, with an iron bar recalling its ancient usage. Below are four stories, one beneath the other. These dungeons, entered by a subterranean door give access to the vaulted semi-dark interior. Above this gloomy portal is scratched the jesting welcome, "*Entrez Messieurs—ches le Roi nostre maistre*,"—"Come in, the King is at home." At this gateway the King stood frequently with his chosen companions, his barber and the common hangman, to gloat over the sufferings of his prisoners. In a cell on

the second story from the bottom, the iron cage was established, so fiendishly contrived for the unending pain of its occupant. Comines, the "Father of modern historians," gives in his memoirs a full account of this detestable place of durance.

Comines fell into disgrace with Anne of Beaujeu by fomenting rebellion against her administration as Regent. He fled and took refuge with the Duke de Bourbon, whom he persuaded to go to the King, the infant Charles VIII, to complain of Anne's misgovernment. Comines was dismissed by the Duke de Bourbon and took service with the Duke d'Orleans. Their intrigues were secretly favored by the King himself, who, as he grew older, became impatient of the wise but imperious control of Anne of Beaujeu. In concert with some other nobles, Comines plotted to carry off the young King and place him under the guardianship of the Duke d'Orleans. Although Charles was a party to the design he punished them when it failed. Comines was arrested at Amboise and taken to Loches, where he was confined for eight months. Then by decree of the Paris parliament his property was confiscated and he was brought to Paris to be imprisoned in the Conciergerie. There he remained for twenty months, and in March, 1489, was condemned to banishment to one of his estates for ten years and to give bail for his good behavior to the amount of 10,000 golden crowns. He was forgiven long before the end of his term and regained his seat and influence in the King's Council of State.

"The King," says Comines, "had ordered several cruel prisons to be made; some were cages of iron and some of wood, but all were covered with iron plates both within and without, with terrible locks, about eight feet wide and seven feet high; the first contriver of them was the Bishop of Verdun (Guillaume d'Haraucourt) who was immediately put into the first of them, where he continued fourteen years. Many bitter curses he has had since his invention, and some from me as I lay in one of them eight months together during the minority of our present King. He (Louis XI) also ordered heavy and terrible fetters to be made in Germany and particularly a certain ring for the feet which was extremely hard to be opened and fitted like an iron collar, with a thick weighty chain and a great globe of iron at the end of it, most unreasonably heavy, which engine was called the King's Nets. However, I have seen many eminent men, deserving persons in these

prisons with these nets about their legs, who afterwards came out with great joy and honor and received great rewards from the king."

Another occupant beside d'Haraucourt, of this intolerable den, so limited in size that "no person of average proportions could stand up comfortably or be at full length within," was Cardinal la Balue,—for some years after 1469. These two great ecclesiastics had been guilty of treasonable correspondence with the Duke of Burgundy, then at war with Louis XI. The treachery was the more base in La Balue, who owed everything to Louis, who had raised him from a tailor's son to the highest dignities in the Church and endowed him with immense wealth. Louis had a strong bias towards low-born men and "made his servants, heralds and his barbers, ministers of state." Louis would have sent this traitor to the scaffold, but ever bigoted and superstitious, he was afraid of the Pope, Paul II, who had protested against the arrest of a prelate and a prince of the Church. He kept d'Haraucourt, the Bishop of Verdun, in prison for many years, for the most part at the Bastile while Cardinal La Balue was moved to and fro: he began at Loches whence, with intervals at Onzain, Montpaysan, and Plessis-lez-Tours, he was brought periodically to the Bastile in order that his tormentor might gloat personally over his sufferings. This was the servant of whom Louis once thought so well that he wrote of him as "a good sort of devil of a bishop just now, but there is no saying what he may grow into by and by." He endured the horrors of imprisonment until within three years of the death of the King, who, after a long illness and a paralytic seizure, yielded at last to the solicitations of the then Pope, Sixtus IV, to release him.

The "Bishops' Prison" is still shown at Loches, a different receptacle from the cages and dungeons occupied by Cardinal La Balue and the Bishop of Verdun. These other bishops did their own decorations akin to Sforza's, but their rude presentment was of an altar and cross roughly depicted on the wall of their cell. Some confusion exists as to their identity, but they are said to have been De Pompadour, Bishop of Peregneux, and De Chaumont, Bishop of Montauban, and their offense was complicity in the conspiracy for which Comines suffered. If this were so it must have been after the reign of Louis XI.

Among the many victims condemned by Louis XI to the tender mercies of Loches, was the Duc d'Alençon, who had already been sentenced to death

in the previous reign for trafficking with the English, but whose life had been spared by Charles VII, to be again forfeited to Louis XI, for conspiracy with the Duke of Burgundy. His sentence was commuted to imprisonment in Loches.

A few more words about Loches. Descending more than a hundred steps we reach the dungeon occupied by Ludovico Sforza, called “Il Moro,” Duke of Milan, who had long been in conflict with France. The epithet applied to him was derived from the mulberry tree, which from the seasons of its flowers and its fruit was taken as an emblem of “prudence.” The name was wrongly supposed to be due to his dark Moorish complexion. After many successes the fortune of war went against Sforza and he was beaten by Trionlzio, commanding the French army, who cast him into the prison of Novara. Il Moro was carried into France, his destination being the underground dungeon at Loches.

Much pathos surrounds the memory of this illustrious prisoner, who for nine years languished in a cell so dark that light entered it only through a slit in fourteen feet of rock. The only spot ever touched by daylight is still indicated by a small square scratched on the stone floor. Ludovico Sforza strove to pass the weary hours by decorating his room with rough attempts at fresco. The red stars rendered in patterns upon the wall may still be seen, and among them, twice repeated, a prodigious helmet giving a glimpse through the casque of the stern, hard looking face inside. A portrait of Il Moro is extant at the Certosa, near Pavia, and has been described as that of a man “with the fat face and fine chin of the elderly Napoleon, the beak-like nose of Wellington, a small, querulous, neat-lipped mouth and immense eyebrows stretched like the talons of an eagle across the low forehead.”

Ludovico Sforza left his imprint on the walls of this redoubtable gaol and we may read his daily repinings in the mournful inscriptions he recorded among the rough red decorations. One runs: “My motto is to arm myself with patience, to bear the troubles laid upon me.” He who would have faced death eagerly in open fight declares here that he was “assailed by it and could not die.” He found “no pity; gaiety was banished entirely from his heart.” At length, after struggling bravely for nearly nine years he was removed from the lower dungeons to an upper floor and was permitted to exercise occasionally in the open air till death came, with its irresistible

order of release. The picture of his first passage through Paris to his living tomb has been admirably drawn:—"An old French street surging with an eager mob, through which there jostles a long line of guards and archers; in their midst a tall man dressed in black camlet, seated on a mule. In his hands he holds his biretta and lifts up unshaded his pale, courageous face, showing in all his bearing a great contempt for death. It is Ludovico, Duke of Milan, riding to his cage at Loches." It is not to the credit of Louis XII and his second wife, Anne of Brittany, widow of his predecessor Charles VIII, that they often occupied Loches as a royal residence during the incarceration of Ludovico Sforza, and made high festival upstairs while their wretched prisoner languished below.

The rebellion of the Constable de Bourbon against Francis I, in 1523, implicated two more bishops, those of Puy and Autun. Bourbon aspired to create an independent kingdom in the heart of France and was backed by the Emperor Charles V. The Sieur de Brézé, Seneschal of Normandy, the husband of the famous Diane de Poitiers, revealed the conspiracy to the King, Francis I, unwittingly implicating Jean de Poitiers, his father-in-law. Bourbon, flying to one of his fortified castles, sent the Bishop of Autun to plead for him with the King, who only arrested the messenger. Bourbon, continuing his flight, stopped a night at Puy in Auvergne, and this dragged in the second bishop. Jean de Poitiers, Seigneur de St. Vallier, was also thrown into Loches, whence the prisoner appealed to his daughter and his son-in-law. "Madame," he wrote to Diane, "here am I arrived at Loches as badly handled as any prisoner could be. I beg of you to have so much pity as to come and visit your poor father." Diane strove hard with the pitiless king, who only pressed on the trial, urging the judges to elicit promptly all the particulars and the names of the conspirators, if necessary by torture. St. Vallier's sentence was commuted to imprisonment, "between four walls of solid masonry with but one small slit of window." The Constable de Bourbon made St. Vallier's release a condition of submission, and Diane de Poitiers, ever earnestly begging for mercy, won pardon at length, which she took in person to her father's gloomy cell, where his hair had turned white in the continual darkness.

The wretched inmates of Loches succeeded each other, reign after reign in an interminable procession. One of the most ill-used was de Rochechouart, nephew of the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, who was mixed up in a court

intrigue in 1633 and detained in Loches with no proof against him in the hopes of extorting a confession.

Mont St. Michel as a State prison is of still greater antiquity than Loches, far older than the stronghold for which it was admirably suited by its isolated situation on the barren sea shore. It is still girt round with mediæval walls from which rise tall towers proclaiming its defensive strength. Its church and Benedictine monastery are of ancient foundation, dating back to the eighth century. It was taken under the especial protection of Duke Rollo and contributed shipping for the invading hosts of William the Conqueror. Later, in the long conflict with the English, when their hosts over-ran Normandy, Mont St. Michel was the only fortress which held out for the French king. The origin of its dungeons and *oubliettes* is lost in antiquity. It had its cage like Loches, built of metal bars, but for these solid wooden beams were afterwards substituted.

Modern sentiment hangs about the citadel of Ham near Amiens, as the prison house of Louis Napoleon and his companions, Generals Cavaignac, Changarnier and Lamoricière, after his raid upon Boulogne, in 1830, when he prematurely attempted to seize supreme power in France and ignominiously failed. Ham had been a place of durance for political purposes from the earliest times. There was a castle before the thirteenth century and one was erected on the same site in 1470 by the Count St. Pol, whom Louis XI beheaded. The motto of the family "*Mon mieux*" (my best) may still be read engraved over the gateway. Another version is to the effect that St. Pol was committed to the Bastile and suffered within that fortress-gaol. He appears to have been a restless malcontent forever concerned in the intrigues of his time, serving many masters and betraying all in turn. He gave allegiance now to France, now England, now Burgundy and Lorraine, but aimed secretly to make himself an independent prince trusting to his great wealth, his ambitious self-seeking activity and his unfailing perfidies. In the end the indignant sovereigns turned upon him and agreed to punish him. St. Pol finding himself in jeopardy fled from France after seeking for a safe conduct through Burgundy. Charles the Bold replied by seizing his person and handing him over to Louis XI, who had claimed the prisoner. "I want a head like his to control a certain business in hand; his body I can do without and you may keep it," was Louis's request. St. Pol, according to this account, was executed on the Place de la Grève. It may be recalled that

Ham was also for a time the prison of Joan of Arc; and many more political prisoners, princes, marshals of France, and ministers of state were lodged there.

The smiling verdant valley of the Loire, which flows through the historic province of Touraine, is rich in ancient strongholds that preserve the memories of mediæval France. It was the home of those powerful feudal lords, the turbulent vassals who so long contended for independence with their titular masters, weak sovereigns too often unable to keep them in subjection. They raised the round towers and square impregnable donjons, resisting capture in the days before siege artillery, all of which have their gruesome history, their painful records showing the base uses which they served, giving effect to the wicked will of heartless, unprincipled tyrants.

Thus, as we descend the river, we come to Blois, with its spacious castle at once formidable and palatial, stained with many blood-thirsty deeds when vicious and unscrupulous kings held their court there. Great personages were there imprisoned and sometimes assassinated. At first the fief of the Counts of Blois, it later passed into the possession of the crown and became the particular property of the dukes of Orleans. It was the favorite residence of that duke who became King Louis XII of France, and his second queen, Anne of Brittany. His son, Francis I, enlarged and beautified it, and his son again, Henry II, married a wife, Catherine de Medicis, who was long associated with Blois and brought much evil upon it. Catherine is one of the blackest female figures in French history; "niece of a pope, mother of four Valois, a Queen of France, widow of an ardent enemy of the Huguenots, an Italian Catholic, above all a Medicis," hers was a dissolute wicked life, her hands steeped in blood, her moral character a reproach to womankind. Her favorite device was "*odiate e aspettate*," "hate and wait," and when she called anyone "friend" it boded ill for him; she was already plotting his ruin. She no doubt inspired, and is to be held responsible for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the murder of the Duc de Guise in this very castle of Blois was largely her doing. It was one of the worst of the many crimes committed in the shameful reign of her son Henry III, the contemptible king with his unnatural affections, his effeminate love of female attire, his little dogs, his loathsome favorites and his nauseating mockeries of holiness. His court was a perpetual scene of intrigue, conspiracy, superstition, the lowest vices, cowardly assassinations and murderous duels. One of the most

infamous of these was a fight between three of his particular associates and three of the Guises, when four of the combatants were killed.

The famous league of the "Sixteen," headed by the Duc de Guise, would have carried Henry III back to Paris and held him there a prisoner, but the King was resolved to strike a blow on his own behalf and determined to kill Guise. The States General was sitting at Blois and Guise was there taking the leading part. The famous Crillon, one of his bravest soldiers, was invited to do the deed but refused, saying he was a soldier and not an executioner. Then one of Henry's personal attendants offered his services with the forty-five guards, and it was arranged that the murder should be committed in the King's private cabinet. Guise was summoned to an early council, but the previous night he had been cautioned by a letter placed under his napkin. "He would not dare," Guise wrote underneath the letter and threw it under the table. Next morning he proceeded to the cabinet undeterred. The King had issued daggers to his guards, saying, "Guise or I must die," and went to his prayers. When Guise lifted the curtain admitting him into the cabinet one of the guards stabbed him in the breast. A fierce struggle ensued, in which the Duke dragged his murderers round the room before they could dispatch him. "The beast is dead, so is the poison," was the King's heartless remark, and he ran to tell his mother that he was "once more master of France." This cowardly act did not serve the King, for it stirred up the people of Paris, who vowed vengeance. Henry at once made overtures to the Huguenots and next year fell a victim to the knife of a fanatic monk at Saint Clou.

Blois ceased to be the seat of the Court after Henry III. Louis XIII, when he came to the throne, imprisoned his mother Marie de Medicis there. It was a time of great political stress when executions were frequent, and much sympathy was felt for Marie de Medicis. A plot was set on foot to release her from Blois. A party of friends arranged the escape. She descended from her window by a rope ladder, accompanied by a single waiting-woman. Many accidents supervened: there was no carriage, the royal jewels had been overlooked, time was lost in searching for the first and recovering the second, but at length Marie was free to continue her criminal machinations. Her chief ally was Gaston d'Orleans, who came eventually to live and die on his estate at Blois. He was a cowardly, self indulgent prince but had a remarkable daughter, Marie de Montpensier, commonly called "La Grande

Mademoiselle," who was the heroine of many stirring adventures, some of which will be told later on.

Not far from Blois are Chambord, an ancient fortress, first transformed into a hunting lodge and later into a magnificent palace, a perfect wilderness of dressed stone; Chaumont, the birth-place of Cardinal d'Amboise and at one time the property of Catherine de Medicis; Amboise, the scene of the great Huguenot massacre of which more on a later page; Chenonceaux, Henri II's gift to Diane de Poitiers, which Catherine took from her, and in which Mary Queen of Scots spent a part of her early married life; Langeais, an Angevin fortress of the middle ages; Azay-le-Rideau, a perfect Renaissance chateau; Fontevrault, where several Plantagenet kings found burial, and Chinon, a triple castle now irretrievably ruined, to which Jeanne d'Arc came seeking audience of the King, when Charles VII formally presented her with a suit of knight's armor and girt on her the famous sword, said to have been picked up by Charles Martel on the Field of Tours after that momentous victory which checked the Moorish invasion, and but for which the dominion of Islam would probably have embraced western Europe.

Two other remarkable prison castles must be mentioned here, Amboise and Angers. The first named is still a conspicuous object in a now peaceful neighborhood, but it offers few traces of antiquity, although it is full of bloody traditions. Its most terrible memory is that of the Amboise conspiracy organised by the Huguenots in 1560, and intended to remove the young king, Francis II, from the close guardianship of the Guises. The real leader was the Prince de Condé, known as "the silent captain." The ostensible chief was a Protestant gentleman of Perigord, named Renaudie, a resolute, intelligent man, stained with an evil record, having been once sentenced and imprisoned for the crime of forgery. He was to appear suddenly at the castle at the head of fifteen hundred devoted followers, surprise the Guises and seize the person of the young king. One of their accomplices, a lawyer, or according to another account, a certain Captain Lignières, was alarmed and betrayed the conspirators. Preparations were secretly made for defence, Renaudie was met with an armed force and killed on the spot, and his party made prisoners by lots, as they appeared. All were forthwith executed, innocent and guilty, even the peasants on their way to market. They were hanged, decapitated or drowned. The court of the castle and the streets of the town ran with blood until the executioners,

sated with the slaughter, took to sewing up the survivors in sacks and throwing them into the river from the bridge garnished with gibbets, and ghastly heads impaled on pikes. A balcony to this day known as the “Grille aux Huguenots” still exists, on which Catherine de Medicis and her three sons, Francis II, the reigning monarch, Charles, afterwards the ninth king of that name, and Henry II, witnessed the massacre in full court dress. Mary, Queen of Scots, the youthful bride of her still younger husband, was also present. The Prince de Condé had been denounced, but there was no positive evidence against him and he stoutly denied his guilt, and in the presence of the whole court challenged any accuser to single combat. No one took up the glove and he remained free until a fresh conspiracy, stimulated by detestation of the atrocities committed by the Guises, seriously compromised the prince. Condé was arrested at Orleans, found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. He was saved by the death of Francis. Mary Stuart afterward returned to Scotland to pass through many stormy adventures and end her life on the scaffold.

The fiendish butchery just described was the last great tragedy Amboise witnessed, but it received one or two notable prisoners as time went on, more particularly Fouquet, the fraudulent superintendent of finances whom Louis XIV pursued to the bitter end; and Lauzun le Beau, the handsome courtier who flew too high “with vaulting ambition, but fell” into the depths of a dungeon. A detailed account of both these cases will be found in another chapter.

In quite recent years Amboise was occupied by a very different prisoner, the intrepid Arab leader Abd-el-Kader, who after his capture by the Duc d’Aumale in 1847, in the last Algerian war, was interred in the heart of France in full view of the so-called “Arab camp” where his Saracen ancestors had gone so near to enslaving Christian Europe.

Angers, once called Black Angers, from the prevailing hue of its dark slate buildings, was the capital of Anjou and the seat of its dukes, so nearly allied with the English Plantagenet dynasty. When Henry II of England held his court there, Angers was reputed second only to London in brilliancy and importance. The French king, Louis XI, after the expulsion of the English, joined the dukedom of Anjou to the Kingdom of France. The venerable castle, a most striking object with its alternate bands of white stone let in

between black rough slate, is still considered from its massive proportions and perfect preservation the finest feudal castle in France. The part overlooking the river, which was the palace of the counts, is now in ruins, but the high tower called Du Moulin or Du Diable, and the south tower called La Tour Dixsept, which contains the old dungeons of the State prisons, is still standing. The miserable fate of their sad occupants may still be noted, and the rings to which they were chained still remain embedded in the rocky walls and the stone floors.

The Isle St. Marguerite

One of two rocky, pine-clad islets near the shore at Cannes, and has an ancient history. Francis I began his captivity here after the Battle of Pavia. Marshal Bazaine was also imprisoned here. It was at one time the prison where the mysterious “Man with the Iron Mask” was confined.

Three famous prisons in their way were Pignerol, Exiles and the island fortress of St. Marguerite. Pignerol was a fortified frontier town of

Piedmont, which was for some time French property, half bought and half stolen from Italy. It stands on the lower slopes of the southern Alps, twenty miles from Turin, fifty from Nice and ninety east of Grenoble. It was a stronghold of the princes of Savoy, capable of effective defence, with a small red-roofed tower and many tall campaniles gathering round an inner citadel, raised on a commanding height. This central keep is a mass of rambling buildings with solid buttressed walls, essentially a place of arms. Pignerol has three principal gateways. One served for the road coming from the westward and was called the gate of France; another from the eastward, was that of Turin; and the third was a "safety" or "secret" gate, avoiding the town and giving upon the citadel. This last gate was opened rarely and only to admit a prisoner brought privately by special escort. It was a French garrison town inhabited largely by Italians. There was a French governor in supreme command, also a king's lieutenant who was commandant of the citadel, and the head gaoler, who held the prison proper; and these three officials constituted a sovereign council of war.

Exiles was an unimportant stronghold, a fort shaped like a five pointed star, surrounding a small château with two tall towers which served as prisons. St. Marguerite is one of the Iles de Lerins, a couple of rocky pine clad islets facing the now prosperous southern resort of Cannes and only fifteen hundred yards from the shore. The two islands called respectively St. Honorat and St. Marguerite have each an ancient history. The first was named after a holy man who early in the fifth century established a monastery of great renown, while upon the neighboring island he struck a well which yielded a miraculous flow of sweet water. Francis I of France began his captivity here after his crushing defeat at the battle of Pavia. The royal fort at the eastern end of St. Marguerite was for some time the abode of the so-called "Man with the Iron Mask," and many scenes of the apocryphal stories of that exploded mystery are laid here.

The island fortress became to some extent famous in our own day by being chosen as the place of confinement for Marshal Bazaine, after his conviction by court martial for the alleged treacherous surrender of Metz to the Germans. As we know, he did not remain long a prisoner, his escape having been compassed by an American friend.

CHAPTER III
VINCENNES AND THE BASTILE

Vincennes and the Bastile—Vincennes described—Castle and woods—Torture—Methods and implements—*Amende Honorable*—Flagellation and mutilations—Notable inmates—Prince de Condé—Origin of the Bastile—Earliest records—Hugues d'Aubriot—Last English garrison—Sir John Falstaff—Frequented by Louis XI and Anne of Beaujeau—Charles VIII—Francis I—Persecution of the Huguenots—Henry II, Diane de Poitiers, and Catherine de Medicis—Her murderous oppressions—Bastile her favorite prison.

We come now to the two great metropolitan prisons that played so large a part in the vexed and stormy annals of France. Vincennes and Bastile may be said to epitomise Parisian history. They were ever closely associated with startling episodes and notable personages, the best and worst Frenchmen in all ages, and were incessantly the centres of rebellions, dissensions, contentions and strife. They were both State prisons, differing but little in character and quality. Vincennes was essentially a place of durance for people of rank and consequence. The Bastile took the nobility also, but with them the whole crowd of ordinary criminals great and small. These prisons were the two weapons forged by autocratic authority and freely used by it alike for the oppression of the weak and down trodden, and the openly turbulent but vainly recalcitrant. The royal relatives that dared oppose the king, the stalwart nobles that conspired or raised the standard of revolt, the great soldiers who dabbled in civil war, found themselves committed to Vincennes. The same classes of offenders, but generally of lesser degree, were thrown into the Bastile. The courtier who forgot his manners or dared to be independent in thought or action, the bitter poetaster and too fluent penman of scurrilous pamphlets, were certain of a lodging at the gloomy citadel of Saint Antoine.

The castle of Vincennes was used primarily as a royal palace and has been called the Windsor of the House of Valois. Philip IV, the first king of that family, kept high festival there in a splendid and luxurious court. The great edifice was of noble dimensions—both a pleasure house and a prison, with towers and drawbridges for defense and suites of stately apartments. It

stood in the centre of a magnificent forest, the famous Bois de Vincennes, the name often used to describe the residence; and the crowned heads and royal guests who constantly visited the French sovereigns hunted the deer in the woods around, or diverted themselves with tilts or tournaments in the courtyard of the castle. The first to use Vincennes largely as a prison was that famous gaoler Louis XI. He did not live there much, preferring as a residence his impregnable fortified palace at Plessis-lez-Tours. Not satisfied with Loches, he utilised Vincennes and kept it constantly filled. Some account of his principal victims will be found in the narrative of succeeding reigns and the extensive use of the various prisons made by succeeding kings.

The prison fortress of Vincennes in its palmiest days consisted of nine great towers; and a tenth, loftier and more solid, was the Donjon, or central keep, commonly called the Royal Domain. Two drawbridges must be passed before entrance was gained by a steep ascent. This was barred by three heavy doors. The last of these communicated directly with the Donjon, being so ponderous that it could only be moved by the combined efforts of the warder within and the sergeant of the guard without. A steep staircase led to the cells above. The four towers had each four stories and each story a hall forty feet long, with a cell at each corner having three doors apiece. These doors acted one on the other. The second barred the first and the third barred the second, and none could be opened without knowledge of secret machinery.

The torture chamber, with all its abominable paraphernalia of “boots,” rack, “stools” and other implements for inflicting torture, was on the first floor. Every French prison of the olden times had its “question” chamber to carry out the penalties and savage processes of the French judicial code. The barbarous treatment administered in it was not peculiar to France alone, but was practised in prisons throughout the so-called civilised world. Torture was in general use in French prisons till a late date and really survived till abolished by the ill-fated Louis XVI in 1780. It may be traced back to the ancient judicial ordeals when an accused was allowed to prove his innocence by withstanding combat or personal attack. It was also known as the “question” because the judge stood by during its infliction and called upon the prisoner to answer the interrogations put to him, when his replies, if any, were written down. The process is described by La Bruyère as a

marvellous but futile invention “quite likely to force the physically weak to confess crimes they never committed and yet quite as certain to favor the escape of the really guilty, strong enough to support the application.” The “question” was of two distinct categories: one, the “preparatory” or “ordinary,” an unfair means of obtaining avowals for the still legally innocent; the other, “preliminary” or “extraordinary,” reserved for those actually condemned to death but believed to know more than had yet been elicited. There were many terrible varieties of torture exhibiting unlimited cruel invention. We are familiar enough with the “rack,” the “wheel,” the “thumb screw” and the “boot.” Other less known forms were the “veglia” introduced into France by the popes when the Holy See came to Avignon. The “veglia” consisted of a small wooden stool so constructed that when the accused sat upon it his whole weight rested on the extremity of his spine. His sufferings soon became acute. He groaned, he shrieked and then fainted, whereupon the punishment ceased until he came to and was again placed on the stool. It was usual to hold a looking glass before his eyes that his distorted features might frighten him into confession. The “estrapade,” like the “veglia,” was borrowed from Italy. By this the torture was applied with a rope and pulley by which the patient was suspended over a slow fire and slowly roasted, being alternately lifted and let down so as to prolong his sufferings. Elsewhere in France fire was applied to the soles of the feet or a blade was introduced between the nail and the flesh of finger or toe. Sometimes sulphur matches or tow was inserted between the fingers and ignited.

In the chief French prisons the “question” was generally limited to the two best known tortures: swallowing great quantities of water and the insertion of the legs within a casing or “boot” of wood or iron. For the first, the accused was chained to the floor and filled with water poured down his throat by means of a funnel. In the “ordinary question” four “cans”—pints, presumably—of water were administered, and for the “extraordinary” eight cans. From a report of the proceedings in the case of a priest accused of sacrilege, who had been already sentenced to death but whose punishment was accentuated by torture, it is possible to realise the sufferings endured. After the first can the victim cried “May God have mercy on me;” at the second he declared, “I know nothing and I am ready to die;” at the third he was silent, but at the fourth he declared he could support it no longer and

that if they would release him he would tell the truth. Then he changed his mind and refused to speak, declaring that he had told all he knew and was forthwith subjected to the "extraordinary question." At the fifth can he called upon God twice. At the sixth he said, "I am dying, I can hold out no longer, I have told all." At the seventh he said nothing. At the eighth he screamed out that he was dying and lapsed into complete silence. Now the surgeon interfered, saying that further treatment would endanger his life, and he was unbound and placed on a mattress near the fire. He appears to have made no revelations and was in due course borne off to the place of execution.

The torture of the "boot" was applied by inserting the legs in an iron apparatus which fitted closely but was gradually tightened by the introduction of wedges driven home within the fastenings. The pain was intense and became intolerable as the wedge was driven farther and farther down between the knee and the iron casing by repeated blows of the mallet. The "boot" was better known in France as the *brodequin* or *buskin*. In England some modification of it was introduced by one Skeffington, a keeper in the Tower, and this gave it the nickname of "Skeffington's gyves" which was corrupted into the words "scavenger's daughters."

It was sometimes shown that the torture had been applied to perfectly innocent people. The operation was performed with a certain amount of care. One of the master surgeons of the prison was always present to watch the effect upon the patient and to offer him advice. The "questioner" was a sworn official who was paid a regular salary, about one hundred francs a year.

Of the secondary punishments, those less than death, there was the *amende honorable*, a public reparation made by degrading exposure with a rope round the neck, sometimes by standing at the door of a church, sometimes by being led through the streets seated on a donkey with face towards the tail. The culprit was often stripped naked to the waist and flogged on the back as he stood or was borne away. Blasphemy, sacrilege and heresy were punished by the exaction of the *amende honorable*. An old King of France was subjected to it by his revolted sons. A reigning prince, the Count of Toulouse, who was implicated in the assassination of a papal legate concerned in judging the *religieuses*, was brought with every mark of

ignominy before an assemblage at the door of a church. Three archers, who had violated a church sanctuary and dragged forth two fugitive thieves, were sentenced on the demand of the clergy to make the *amende* at the church door arrayed in petticoats and bearing candles in their hands.

Flagellation was a cruel and humiliating punishment, largely used under degrading conditions and with various kinds of instruments. Mutilation was employed in every variety; not a single part of the body has escaped some penalties. There were many forms of wounding the eyes and the mouth; tongue, ears, teeth, arms, hands and feet have been attacked with fire and weapons of every kind. To slice off the nose, crop the ears, amputate the wrist, draw the teeth, cut off the lower limbs, were acts constantly decreed. Branding with red hot irons on the brow, cheeks, lips and shoulders, kept the executioner busy with such offenses as blasphemy, petty thefts and even duelling. The effects served to inhibit like offenses, but the punishment was in no sense a preventive or corrective.

Prisoners were generally received at Vincennes in the dead of night, a natural sequel to secret unexplained arrests, too often the result of jealousy or caprice or savage ill-will. The ceremony on arrival was much the same as that which still obtains. A close search from head to foot, the deprivation of all papers, cash and valuables, executed under the eyes of the governor himself. The new arrival was then conducted to his lodging, generally a foul den barely furnished with bedstead, wooden table and a couple of rush-bottomed chairs. The first mandate issued was that strict silence was the invariable rule. Arbitrary and irksome rules governed the whole course of procedure and daily conduct. The smallest privileges depended entirely upon the order of superior authority. Books or writing materials were issued or forbidden as the gaoler, the king's minister, or the king himself might decide. Dietary was fixed by regulation and each prisoner's maintenance paid out of the king's bounty on a regular scale according to the rank and quality of the captive. The allowance for princes of the blood was $10 per diem, for marshals of France $7.50, for judges, priests and captains in the army or officials of good standing about $2, and for lesser persons fifty cents. These amounts were ample, but pilfering and peculation were the general rule. The money was diverted from the use intended, articles were issued in kind and food and fuel were shamelessly stolen. Prisoners who were not allowed to supply themselves, were often half starved and half

frozen in their cells. So inferior was the quality of the prison rations, that those who purloined food could not sell it in the neighborhood and the peasants said that all that came from the Donjon was rotten. In sharp contrast was the revelry and rioting in which prisoners of high station were permitted to indulge. These were attended by their own servants and constantly visited by their personal friends of both sexes. An amusing sidelight on the régime of Vincennes may be read in the account of the arrest of the great Prince de Condé, during the Fronde, and his two confederate princes, the Prince de Conti, his brother, and the Duc de Longueville, his brother-in-law. No preparations had been made for their reception, but Condé, a soldier and an old campaigner, supped on some new-laid eggs and slept on a bundle of straw. Next morning he played tennis and shuttle-cock with the turnkeys, sang songs and began seriously to learn music. A strip of garden ground, part of the great court, surrounding the prison, where the prisoners exercised, was given to Condé to cultivate and he raised pinks which were the admiration of all Paris. He poked fun at the Governor and when the latter threatened him for breach of rule, proposed to strangle him. This is clearly the same Condé who nicknamed Cardinal Mazarin, “Mars,” when his eminence aspired to lead an army, and when he wrote him a letter addressed it to “His Excellency, the Great Scoundrel.”

Prison discipline must have been slack in Vincennes, nor could innumerable locks and ponderous chains make up for the careless guard kept by its gaolers. Many escapes were effected from Vincennes, more creditable to the ingenuity and determination of the fugitives than to the vigilance and integrity of those charged with their safe custody.

Antiquarian researches connect the Bastile in its beginning with the fortifications hastily thrown up by the Parisians in the middle of the fourteenth century to defend the outskirts of the city upon the right bank of the river. The walls built by Philip Augustus one hundred and fifty years earlier were by this time in a ruinous condition. The English invasion had prospered, and after the battle of Poitiers the chief authority in the capital, Étienne Marcel, the provost of the merchants, felt bound to protect Paris. An important work was added at the eastern entrance of the city, and the gateway was flanked by a tower on either side. Marcel was in secret correspondence with the then King of Navarre, who aspired to the throne of

France, and would have admitted him to Paris through this gateway, but was not permitted to open it. The infuriated populace attacked him as he stood with the keys in his hand, and although he sought asylum in one of the towers he was struck down with an axe and slain.

This first fortified gate was known as the Bastile of St. Antoine. The first use of the word “Bastile,” which is said to have been of Roman origin, was applied to the temporary forts raised to cover siege works and isolate and cut off a beleaguered city from relief or revictualment. The construction of a second and third fortress was undertaken some years later, in 1370, when the first stone of the real Bastile was laid. Another provost, Hugues Aubriot by name, had authority from Charles V to rebuild and strengthen the defences, and was supplied by the king with moneys for the purpose. Aubriot appears to have added two towers to the gateway, and this made the Bastile into a square fort with a tower at each angle. This provost was high-handed and ruled Paris with a rod of iron, making many enemies, who turned on him. He offended the ever turbulent students of the University and was heavily fined for interfering with their rights. To raise money for the king, he imposed fresh taxes, and was accused of unlawful commerce with the Jews, for which he was handed over to the ecclesiastical tribunal and condemned to be burnt to death. This sentence was, however, commuted to perpetual imprisonment, and tradition has it that he was confined in one of the towers he had himself erected. The historian compares his sad fate with that of other designers of punishment, such as the Greek who invented the brazen bull and was the first to be burnt inside it, or Enguerrand de Marigny, who was hung on his own gibbet of Montfauçon, and the Bishop Haraucourt of Verdun, who was confined in his own iron cage.

Hugues Aubriot was presently transferred from the Bastile to For-l’Évêque prison where he was languishing at the time of the insurrection of the Maillotins. These men rose against the imposition of fresh taxes and armed themselves with leaden mallets which they seized in the arsenal. A leader failing them, they forcibly released Hugues Aubriot and begged him to be their captain, escorting him in triumph to his house. But the ex-provost pined for peace and quiet and slipped away at the first chance. He was a native of Dijon in Burgundy and he escaped thither to die in obscurity the following year.

Charles VI enlarged and extended the Bastile by adding four more towers and giving it the plan of a parallelogram, and it remained with but few modifications practically the same when captured by the revolutionists in 1789. The fortress now consisted of eight towers, each a hundred feet high and with a wall connecting them, nine feet thick. Four of these towers looked inwards facing the city, four outwards over the suburb of St. Antoine. A great ditch, twenty-five feet deep and one hundred and twenty feet wide, was dug to surround it. The road which had hitherto passed through it was diverted, the gateway blocked up and a new passage constructed to the left of the fortress. The Bastile proper ceased to be one of the entrances of Paris and that of the Porte St. Antoine was substituted. Admission to the fortress was gained at the end opposite the rue St. Antoine between the two towers named the Bazinière and Comté overlooking the Seine. On the ground floor of the former was the reception ward, as we should call it, a detailed account of which is preserved in the old archives. The first room was the porter's lodge with a guard bed and other pieces of furniture of significant purpose; two ponderous iron bars fixed in the wall, with iron chains affixed ending in fetters for hands and feet, and an iron collar for the neck; the avowed object of all being to put a man in "Gehenna," the ancient prison euphemism for hell. A four-wheeled iron chariot is also mentioned, no doubt for the red hot coals to be used in inflicting torture, the other implements for which were kept in this chamber. The tower of the Comté was like the rest, of four stories, and became chiefly interesting for the escapes effected from it by Latude and D'Allègre in later years.

All the towers of the Bastile received distinctive names derived from the chance associations of some well-known personage or from the purpose to which they were applied. These names became the official designation of their occupants, who were entered in the books as "No. so and so" of "such and such a tower." Personal identity was soon lost in the Bastile. If we made the circuit of the walls, starting from the Bazinière Tower first described, we should come to that of La Bertaudière in the façade above the rue St. Antoine and overlooking the city, the third floor of which was the last resting place of that mysterious prisoner, the Man with the Iron Mask. Next came the tower of Liberty, a name supposed by some to have originated in some saturnine jest, by others to have been the scene of

successful escape, although attempts were usually made on the other side of the Bastile which overlooked the open country. The tower of the Well (Du Puits) had an obvious derivation.

At the north-east angle was the Corner Tower, so called, no doubt, because it was situated at the corner of the street and the Boulevard St. Antoine. Next came the Chapel Tower, from its neighborhood to the old Chapel of the Bastile. This at one time took rank as the noble quarter of the fortress and was called the "Donjon"—for in the time of the English domination the king's chamber and that of the "captain" were situated in this tower. In later days the Chapel Tower had accommodation for only three occupants, two on the second and one on the third floor, the first floor being used as a store house. Next came the Treasure Tower, a title which referred back to a very early date, as witness receipts in existence for moneys paid over to the king's controller-general of finances. In the reign of Henry IV, a prudent monarch with a thrifty minister, the ever faithful and famous Duke de Sully, large sums were deposited in this tower as a reserve for the enterprises he contemplated. The money was soon expended after Henry's assassination, in wasteful extravagances and civil wars. It is of record that after payment of all current expenses of State, the surplus collected by Sully in the Bastile amounted to 41,345,000 livres or upwards of 120,000,000 francs, or $25,000,000. On reaching the eighth, or last tower, that of the Comté, we return to the northernmost side of the great gate already spoken of.

Speaking generally, all these towers were of four stories, with an underground basement each containing a number of dens and dungeons of the most gloomy and horrible character. The stone walls were constantly dripping water upon the slimy floor which swarmed with vermin, rats, toads and newts. Scanty light entered through narrow slits in the wall on the side of the ditch, and a small allowance of air, always foul with unwholesome exhalations. Iron bedsteads with a thin layer of dirty straw were the sole resting places of the miserable inmates. The fourth or topmost floors were even more dark than the basement. These, the Calottes, or "skull caps," (familiar to us as the head-dress of the tonsured priests) were cagelike in form with low, vaulted roofs, so that no one might stand upright within save in the very centre of the room. They were barely lighted by narrow windows that gave no prospect, from the thickness of the walls and the plentiful provision of iron gratings having bars as thick as a man's arms.

The fortress stood isolated in the centre of its own deep ditch, which was encircled by a narrow gallery serving as a *chemin-des-rondes*, the sentinel's and watchman's beat. This was reached by narrow staircases from the lower level of the interior and there were sentry boxes at intervals for the guards. North of the Bastile, beyond the main prison structure, but included in the general line of fortifications, was the Bastion, used as a terrace and exercising ground for privileged prisoners. In later years permission was accorded to the governors to grow vegetables upon this open space and fruit gardens were in full bearing upon the final demolition of the Bastile. The privilege conceded to the governor in this garden became a grievance of the prisoners, for it was let to a contractor who claimed that when the prisoners frequented it for exercise damage was done to the growing produce, and by a royal decree all prisoners were forbidden henceforth to enter this space.

The Bastile was for the first two centuries of its history essentially a military stronghold serving, principally, as a defensive work, and of great value to its possessors for the time being. Whoever held the Bastile over-awed Paris and was in a sense the master of France. In the unceasing strife of parties it passed perpetually from hand to hand and it would be wearisome to follow the many changes in its ownership. In the long wars between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, the latter seized Paris in the reign of the half-witted Charles V, but the Armagnacs held the Bastile and the person of the king's eldest son, whose life was eventually saved by this seclusion. This dauphin came afterwards to the throne through the help of the English king, Henry V, who married his daughter Catherine and was appointed Regent of France. Under this régime Paris was occupied for a time by an English garrison. When at length the rival factions in France made common cause against the intrusive strangers the French re-entered Paris and the English were forced to retire into the Bastile, where they were so closely besieged that they presently offered to capitulate. The fortress was greatly over-crowded, supplies ran short and there was no hope of relief. The Constable of France, Richemont, was master of the situation outside, and at first refused terms, hoping to extort a large ransom, but the people of Paris, eager to be rid of the foreigners, advised him to accept their surrender and to allow the English garrison to march out with colors flying. It was feared that the people of Paris would massacre them as they passed through the streets and they were led by a circuitous route to the river

where, amidst the hoots and hisses of a large crowd, they embarked in boats and dropped down the river to Rouen.

It is interesting to note here that one of the English governors of the Bastile was a certain Sir John Falstaff, not Shakespeare's Sir John but a very different person, a stalwart knight of unblemished character, great judgment and approved prowess. He was a soldier utterly unlike the drunken, and disreputable "Jack Falstaff," with his unconquerable weakness for sack, who only fought men in buckram. The real Sir John Falstaff was careful to maintain his charge safely, strengthening the fortress at all points, arming and victualling it and handing it over in good order to his successor, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby. History has to record other good things of Sir John Falstaff, who is remembered as a patron of letters, who paid a price for the translation of Cicero's "De Senectute," who endowed Magdalen College, Oxford, with much valuable property and whose name is still commemorated among the founders of the College in the anniversary speech. He was a Knight of the Garter, held many superior commands and died full of honors at the advanced age of eighty. Lord Willoughby was governor at the time of the surrender. He withdrew in safety and evidently in good heart for he won a victory over the French at Amiens after his retreat.

After the exodus of the English and with the accession of Louis XI, the two State prisons of Paris were very fully and constantly occupied. The chief episodes in the checkered history of France, conspiracies, revolts and disturbances, were written in the prison registers and their records are a running commentary upon the principal events of French history. The personal qualities of the rulers, their quarrels with their great subjects, the vindictive policies they followed, their oppression of, and cruelty to the people, may be read in the annals of Vincennes and the Bastile. By taking the reigns seriatim and examining the character of the sovereigns, we shall best realise passing events and those who acted in them.

Let us take up the story with Louis XI to whom some reference has already been made. Some of his victims, the prisoners of Loches and the Comte de Saint Pol have figured on an earlier page. To these we may add the story of the two Armagnacs, Jacques and Charles. Charles, although wholly innocent, was arrested and imprisoned because his brother Jacques had

revolted against the king. Charles d'Armagnac was first tortured horribly, then thrown into one of the cages of the Bastile, which he inhabited for fourteen years and when released was found to be bereft of reason. Jacques, better known as the Duc de Nemours, had been the boy friend and companion of Louis, who lavished many favors on him which he repaid by conspiring against the royal authority. When orders were issued for his arrest he withdrew to his own castle, Carlet, hitherto deemed impregnable. It succumbed, however, when besieged in due form, and the Duke was taken prisoner. He had given himself up on a promise that his life would be spared, but he received no mercy from his offended king. His first prison was Pierre-Encise, in which his hair turned grey in a few nights. Thence he was transferred to a cage in the Bastile. The minute instructions were issued by the King as to this prisoner's treatment, and in a letter it was directed that he should never be permitted to leave his cage or to have his fetters removed or to go to mass. He was only to be taken out to be tortured, in the cruel desire to extort an avowal that he had intended to kill the King and set up the Dauphin in his place. The Duke made a piteous appeal, signing himself "Pauvre Jacques," but he was sent for trial before the Parliament in a packed court from which the peers were absent. He was condemned to death and executed, according to Voltaire, under the most revolting circumstances. It is fair to add that no other historian reports these atrocities. It is said that the scaffold on which he suffered was so constructed that his children, the youngest of whom was only five, were placed beneath clad in white and were splashed with the blood from his severed head that dropped through the openings of the planks. After this fearful tragedy these infants were carried back to the Bastile and imprisoned there in a narrow cell for five years. Other records, possibly also apocryphal, are preserved of additional torments inflicted on the Armagnac princes. It is asserted that they were taken out of their cells twice weekly to be flogged in the presence of the governor and to have a tooth extracted every three months.

The character of Louis XI shows black and forbidding in history. His tireless duplicity was matched by his distrustfulness and insatiable curiosity. He braved all dangers to penetrate the secrets of others, risked his own life, spent gold, wasted strength, used the matchless cunning of a red Indian, betrayed confidences and lied to all the world. Yet he was gifted with keen

insight into human nature. No one knew better than he the strength and weakness of his fellow creatures. Withal, France has had worse rulers. He may be credited with a desire to raise and help the common people. He saw that in their industry and contentment the wealth of the kingdom chiefly lay and looked forward to the day when settled government would be assured. "If I live a little longer," he told Comines the historian, "there shall be only one weight, one measure, one law for the kingdom. We will have no more lawyers cheating and pilfering, lawsuits shall be shortened, and there shall be good police in the country." These dreams were never realised; but at least, Louis was not a libertine and the slave of selfish indulgence, the most vicious in a vicious court, ever showing an evil example and encouraging dissolute manners and shameless immorality, as were many of those who came after him.

Although the Salic law shut the female sex out of the succession to the throne, supreme power was frequently wielded by women in France. One of the earliest instances of this was in the steps taken by Louis XI to provide for the government during the minority of his son, who succeeded as Charles IX. The King's daughter, Anne de Beaujeu, was named regent by her father, who had a high opinion of her abilities and considered her "the least foolish of her sex he had met; not the wisest, for there are no sensible women." She was in truth possessed of remarkable talents and great strength of character, having much of her father's shrewdness and being even less unscrupulous. But she ruled with a high hand and her young brother submitted himself entirely to her influence. She felt it her duty to make an example of the evil counsellors upon whom Louis had so much relied. Oliver le Daim, the ex-barber who had been created Comte de Meulan, was hanged, and his estates confiscated; Doyat, chief spy and informer, was flogged and his tongue pierced with a hot iron; Coictier, the King's doctor, who had wielded too much authority, was fined heavily and sent into exile. Anne's brother-in-law, the Duc d'Orleans, afterwards King Louis XII, had expected the regency and rebelled, but she put him down with a strong hand, destroyed the insurgent forces that he gathered around him, and made him a close prisoner in the great tower of Bourges, where he endured the usual penalties,—confinement in a narrow, low-roofed cell by day and removal to the conventional iron cage at night. Better fortune came to him in a few short years, for by the death of the Dauphin, only son of

Charles VIII, Louis became next heir to the throne, and ascended it on the sudden death of the King from an accident in striking his head against the low archway of a dark corridor. He succeeded also to the King's bed, for in due course he married his widow, Anne of Brittany, another woman of forcible character, on whom he often relied, sometimes too greatly.

The reign of Charles VIII and Louis brought military glory and a great increase of territory to France. The records of generally successful external war rather than internal dissensions fill the history of the time and we look in vain for lengthy accounts of prisoners relegated to the State prisons. With the accession of Francis I another epoch of conflict arrived and was general throughout Europe, involving all the great nations. It was the age of chivalry, when knights carried fortunes on their backs and the most lavish outlay added to the "pomp and circumstance" of war. "The Field of the Cloth of Gold" remains as a landmark in history, when kings vied with each other in extravagant ostentation and proposed to settle their differences by personal combat. The reign was brilliant with achievement abroad, but at home the people suffered much misery and Francis kept his prisons filled. Some great personages fell under his displeasure and were committed to the Bastile; notably, Montmorency, Constable of France, and Chabot, Admiral of France. These two, once school companions of the King, became bitter rivals and the Constable persuaded the King to try the Admiral on a charge of embezzlement. Francis, jealous of Chabot, readily accepted the accusation, and sent him to the Bastile, where the most flagrant violations of justice were used to secure conviction. He escaped with fines and banishment; and the next year the fickle monarch forgave him and released him from durance. He had been so sorely tried by his imprisonment that no doctor could restore him to health. The Chancellor, Poyet, who had framed the indictment, next found himself in the Bastile, suspected of being in the possession of important State secrets. The King himself appeared as the witness against him and although the charges were vague, he was sentenced to fine and confiscation of property.

Castle St. André, Avignon

Fortress and prison used by the popes when Avignon was the papal residence, in the fourteenth century. Avignon remained the property of the popes after their return to Rome, until its annexation by the French in 1791.

The persecution of the Huguenots began in the reign of Francis I, who from the first declared himself on the side of the Pope. Protestantism as preached by Martin Luther took another form in France, and the Geneva doctrines of Calvin, which went much further, were followed. Calvin, it may be said here, rejected the Episcopate which Luther had retained. He recognised only two sacraments,—Baptism and the Last Supper, and desired his disciples to imitate the early Christians in the austerity of their morals. The French Protestants were styled Calvinists and more generally Huguenots, a name taken from the German word, "*Eidgenossen*," or "confederates." Calvinism made slow progress in France although it numbered amongst its adherents some of the best heads in the nation, men of letters, savants, great

lawyers and members of the highest aristocracy. They were persecuted pitilessly. In 1559 Berquin, a king's councillor, a man of much learning, was burned alive in Paris and many shared his fate as martyrs to the new faith in the great cities such as Lyons, Toulouse, and Marseilles. The most horrible atrocities were perpetrated against the Vaudois, a simple, loyal population residing in the towns and villages around Avignon and on the borders of the Durance. Two fanatical prelates of the Guise family, the Cardinal de Tournon and the Cardinal de Lorraine, headed the movement in the course of which 3,000 persons were massacred,—men, women and children, and any who escaped were condemned to the galleys for life. Nevertheless the reformed religion gained ground steadily. The new ideas appealed to the people despite opposition. Neither persecution, nor the threats fulminated by the Council of Trent, nor the energies of the new order of Jesuits, could stamp out the new faith; and religious intolerance, backed by the strong arm of the Church was destined to deluge France with bloodshed in the coming centuries.

Henry II, who followed his father Francis on the throne, redoubled the persecution which was stained with incessant and abominable cruelties. The ordinary process of law was set aside in dealing with the Huguenots who were brought under ecclesiastical jurisdiction. An edict published in 1555, enjoined all governors and officers of justice to punish without delay, without examination and without appeal, all heretics condemned by the judges. The civil judge was no longer anything but the passive executant of the sentences of the Church. The Parliament of Paris protested, but the King turned a deaf ear to these remonstrances and summoned a general meeting of all the Parliaments, which he attended in person and where he heard some home truths. One of the most outspoken was a great nobleman, one Anne Du Bourg, who defended the Protestants, declaring that they were condemned to cruel punishment while heinous criminals altogether escaped retribution. Du Bourg and another, Dufaure, were arrested and were conveyed to the Bastile where they were soon joined by other members of the Parliament. After many delays Du Bourg was brought to trial, convicted and sentenced to be burnt to death. "It is the intention of the Court," so ran the judgment, "that the said Du Bourg shall in no wise feel the fire, and that before it be lighted and he is cast therein he shall be strangled, yet if he should wish to dogmatise and indulge in any remarks he shall be gagged so

as to avoid scandal." He was executed on the Place de la Grève on the top of a high gallows under which a fire was lighted to receive the dead body when it fell.

Henry II had been a weak and self-indulgent king. Ostentatious and extravagant, he wasted large sums in the expenses of his court and lavished rich gifts on his creatures, a course which emptied the treasury and entailed burdensome taxation. He was entirely under the thumb of his mistress, Diane de Poitiers, a cold-blooded, selfish creature, who ruled him and the country with unquestioned supremacy, before whom even the lawful queen, Catherine de Medicis, humiliated herself and paid abject court. The King's ministers, the Constable Montmorency and the Duc de Guise, were at first rivals in power with Diane, but soon joined with her in riding roughshod over the country, and in bestowing all good things, places, governments and profitable charges on their friends and creatures. Foreign adventure, external wars, famine and pestilence constantly impoverished France. The people rose frequently in insurrection and were always suppressed with sanguinary cruelty. Constable Montmorency, above mentioned, dealt so severely with Bordeaux, that in a short space of time no fewer than four hundred persons were beheaded, burned, torn asunder by wild horses or broken on the wheel.

A prominent figure of those days was Mary Stuart, better known as Mary, Queen of Scots, that fascinating woman who was "a politician at ten years old and at fifteen governed the court." She was the child-wife of Francis II, who unexpectedly came to the throne on the sudden death by mischance of Henry II at a tournament held in front of the Bastile. He had challenged Montgomery, an officer of the Scottish Guard, to break a lance with him and in the encounter a splinter entered Henry's eye and penetrated to the brain.

The tragic death of Francis II was another of those instances in which the Salic Law was evaded and a woman held supreme power. Catherine de Medicis has already appeared on the scene in the sanguinary suppression of the conspiracy of Amboise. This was only one of the atrocities that stained her long tenure of power as Regent of France during the minority of her son Charles IX. Her character has been already indicated. Evil was ever in the ascendant with her and in her stormy career she exhibited the most

profound cunning, a rare fertility of resource, and the finished diplomacy of one trained in the Machiavellian school. She was double-faced and deceitful beyond measure. Now the ally of one political party, now of the other, she betrayed both. She even affected sympathy at times with the Protestants and often wept bitter crocodile tears over their sufferings. For a time liberty of conscience was conceded to the Huguenots but Catherine desired always to conciliate the Catholics and concerted measures with Philip of Spain to bring about a new persecution. A fresh conflict ensued in which successes were gained on both sides, but the Huguenots showed so firm a front that peace could not be denied them. They were always prepared to rise, offering a hydra-headed resistance that might be scotched but could not be killed. To crush them utterly Catherine planned the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, in which the Admiral Coligny and 10,000 Protestants were murdered in Paris alone and 30,000 more in the provinces. This ineffaceable crime to which Charles IX had weakly consented, seemed to paralyse the Huguenot cause and many of their principal leaders abjured the new faith. Charles IX, tortured by remorse, constantly haunted by superstitious terrors, rapidly succumbed to wasting disease and died penitent, acknowledging his guilt.

Some time previously Henri d'Anjou had been elected King of Poland and on his departure, efforts were made to secure the succession for his younger brother, the Duc d'Alençon, who was to own himself the protector of the Huguenots. The plot failed and served only to fill the prisons of Vincennes and Bastile. Montgomery, the Huguenot leader, was implicated. He had surrendered on a vague promise of safe conduct which ended in his torture to compel confession of complicity in the plot. He was on the point of being secretly strangled when Catherine de Medicis, who had gone to the Bastile to be present at his execution, suddenly changed her mind and set the surprised prisoner free.

Another class was committed to the Bastile by Catherine de Medicis. She waged war constantly against coiners and issuers of false money; their chief ringleader was sent to the Bastile with special instructions for his "treatment." He was transferred secretly to Paris from Rouen and shut up alone in an especially private place where no news could be had of him. This order was signed by Catherine herself. Next year (1555) a defaulting finance officer was committed and the lieutenant of the Bastile was ordered

to forbid him to speak to a soul or write or give any hint where he was. Again, a Gascon gentleman, named Du Mesnil, was taken in the act of robbing and murdering a courier on his way to Italy, the bearer of 30,000 crowns worth of pearls. Du Mesnil's accomplices, two simple soldiers, were hanged at the Halles but he himself was sent to the Bastile and recommended to its governor for "good discipline." This prisoner seems to have preferred liberty to the favor shown him, such as it was, for in November, 1583, he made a desperate attempt to escape. The account given by L'Estoile in his memoirs, is that Du Mesnil, weary of his close confinement, burned down the door of his cell, got out, became possessed of a rope from the well in the court, climbed to the top of the terrace (the Bastion), fastened his rope through an artillery wheel and lowered himself into the ditch. The rope had been lengthened by another made from his sheets and bedding, but it was still too short to reach the bottom, and letting himself fall he was caught on a window below and making outcry was recaptured and re-imprisoned. A more distinguished prisoner was Bernard Palissy, the famous potter who was committed to gaol as a Protestant and died in the Bastile in 1590 when eighty years of age. L'Estoile tells us that Palissy at his death bequeathed him two stones, one of them, part of a petrified skull which he accounted a philosopher's stone, the other, a stone he had himself manufactured. "I have them still," says L'Estoile, "carefully preserved in my cabinet for the sake of the good old man whom I loved and relieved in his necessity,—not as much as I could have wished, but to the full extent of my power."

When Henry III assassinated the Duc de Guise at Blois, Paris took it greatly to heart and swore vengeance. The "Sixteen" held the Bastile, and its governor, Bussy-Leclerc, an ex-fencing master, sought to coerce the Parliament, seizing at once upon all with royalist leanings and driving them into the Bastile. President Auguste de Thou was arrested and with him his wife, who is said to have been the first female occupant of this prison. Now the King, in despair, turned to the Huguenots and formed an alliance with Henry of Navarre. The two kings joined forces to recover Paris and the Parisians, alarmed, feeling they could not make long resistance, accepted the worst. Some said there would be a second St. Bartholomew, for the "Leaguers" and the Royalists boasted that so many should be hanged that the wood for gibbets would run short. But the situation suddenly changed,

for Henry III was unexpectedly assassinated by a fanatical monk, Clément, in the very heart of the royal apartments.

CHAPTER IV
THE RISE OF RICHELIEU

Early governors of the Bastile—Frequent changes—Day of Barricades—Conspiracy of Biron—Assassination of Henry IV—Ravaillac—Barbarous sentence—Marie de Medicis left Regent—Story of the Concinis—Rise of Richelieu—Gifts and character—His large employment of the State prisons—Duelling prohibited—The Day of Dupes—Triumph over his enemies—Fall of Marie de Medicis—Maréchal Bassompierre—His prolonged imprisonment.

We may pause a moment at this stage to give some attention to a few of the more prominent governors of the Bastile, appointed by each side in turn during the long conflicts of the opposing parties. Antoine d'Ivyer was the first after the English, as captain under the supreme command of Duke Charles of Bourbon. One Cissey, after fifteen years' tenure in the Bastile, was succeeded by La Rochette, he by De Melun, he by De Chauvigny, and the last by Phillip Luillier, who enjoyed the confidence of Louis XI and was personally in charge of the bishops and dukes who have been mentioned. He was the last of the royal functionaries, the court officials other than military men who acted as gaolers. Only in the troublous times of the League and later of the Fronde, when the possession of the Bastile meant so much to the existing régime, was the fortress entrusted to the strong hands of soldiers and men of action equal to any emergency. After Luillier the charge was considered equal to a provincial government and those entrusted with it were some of the most considerable persons in the State, constables or ministers who ruled by lieutenant or deputy and kept only the title and dignity of the office. It was long deemed hereditary in certain great families and descended from father to son, as with the Montmorencys. The head of that house, William, in 1504, was succeeded by his son, Anne, a Pluralist, at the same time governor of Paris and captain of the castle of Vincennes. Francis, a marshal of France, son of the last-named, was a third Montmorency governor. Much later the post was held by successive members of the family of Admiral Coligny, and some of the governors were very eminent persons, such as Châteauneuf, the Duc de Luynes, Maréchal Bassompierre and Sully, the celebrated minister of Henry IV, whose

memoirs have been widely read and were the inspiration of the English novelist, Stanley Weyman.

The Bastile often changed hands. When Henry of Guise made himself master of Paris after the “Battle,” or “Day of the Barricades,” Laurent Testu was governor or king’s lieutenant of the Bastile; but after the second day’s fighting, when summoned to surrender, he obeyed and opened the gates. The Duc de Guise then gave the governorship to one Bussy-Leclerc, a devoted adherent, but of indifferent character, who had been a procureur of the Parliament and a fencing master. He had a large following of bullies and cut-throats. The prisoners in the Bastile were quite at his mercy and he ruled with a rough, reckless hand, inflicting all manner of cruelties in order to extort money,—squeezing the rich and torturing the poor. After the assassination of Henry of Guise at Blois, he planned reprisals against Henry III and sought to intimidate the Parliament, which would have made submission to the King, by making its members prisoners in the Bastile. Leclerc’s excesses roused Paris against him, and the Duc de Mayenne, now the head of the League, threatened the Bastile. Leclerc, in abject terror, at once surrendered on condition that he might retire from the capital to Brussels with the plunder he had acquired. Dubourg l’Espinasse, a brave, honorable soldier, was appointed to the Bastile by the Duc de Mayenne, in succession to Leclerc and defended it stoutly against Henry of Navarre, now King Henry IV, after the assassination of his predecessor. Dubourg declared that he knew no king of France but the Duc de Mayenne, and on being told that Henry was master of Paris, said, “Good, but I am master of the Bastile!” He at length agreed to yield up the fortress to the Duke, who had entrusted him with the command, and finally marched out with all the honors of war, gaining great credit from the King for his staunch and loyal conduct to his superiors. The text of the capitulation has been preserved and its quaint phraseology may be transcribed. The commandant promised to hand over to the king, “on Sunday at three in the afternoon the said Bastile, its artillery and munitions of war. In return for which the King will permit the garrison to march out with arms, horses, furniture and all belongings. The troops will issue by one gate with drums beating, matches lighted and balls” (for loading).

It is recorded of Henry IV by the historian Maquet, that he was the king who least abused the Bastile. It is due this sovereign to say that the

prisoners confined in it during his reign were duly tried and condemned by Parliament and that from his accession the fortress lost its exceptional character and became an ordinary prison. Sully was appointed governor and received a letter of appointment in which the King announced that he relied more than ever upon his loyalty and had decided to make him captain of the Bastile: “so that if I should have any birds to put in the cage and hold tight I can rely upon your foresight, diligence and loyalty.” Few prisoners were committed to the Bastile in this reign, but all imprisoned were notably traitors. Such was Charles, Maréchal de Biron, the restless and unstable subject who conspired more than once against the King, by whom at one time he had been exceedingly favored. Henry IV was greatly attached to Biron. “I never loved anyone as I loved Biron,” he said. “I could have confided my son and my kingdom to him.” For a time Biron served him well, yet he, too, entered into a dangerous conspiracy with the King of Spain, the Duke of Savoy and the King’s disloyal subjects in France.

Henry IV forgave him and paid his debts, which were large, for he was a great gambler and had lost large sums at the tables. Biron was sent to London as ambassador to the English Queen Elizabeth but resumed his evil courses on his return to France and was summoned before the King to answer for them. Henry promised to pardon and forgive him if he would confess his crimes, but Biron was obstinately silent and was committed to the Bastile. He was tried openly before the Parliament and unanimously convicted by one hundred and twenty-seven judges. The sentence was death and he was to be publicly executed on the Place de la Grève, but Henry, dreading the sympathy of the mob and not indisposed to spare his friend the contumely of a public hanging, allowed the execution to take place within the Bastile. Biron, although he had acknowledged his guilt, died protesting against the sentence. He comported himself with little dignity upon the scaffold, resisting the headman and trying to strangle him. Three times he knelt down at the block and three times sprang to his feet; and the fourth time was decapitated with much dexterity by the executioner.

The Comte d’Auvergne, the natural son of Charles IX and Marie Touchet, was an ally of Biron’s and put on his trial at the same time. Their common offense had been to invite invasion by the Spaniards and stir up a revolution throughout France. D’Auvergne was sentenced to death and with him the Comte d’Entragues, who had married Marie Touchet, but neither suffered.

D’Auvergne remained in the Bastile for twelve years. He was released in the following reign and made a good appearance at court as the Duc d’Angoulême. Henry IV had been moved to soften the rigors of his imprisonment and wrote to the governor (Sully) saying that as he had heard his nephew d’Auvergne needed change of air, he was to be placed in “the pavilion at the end of the garden of the arsenal which looks upon the water, but to be guarded in any way that seemed necessary for the security of his person.”

Reference must be made to one inmate of the Bastile at this period, the Vicomte de Tavannes, who was opposed to Henry IV as a partisan of the League. He was long held a prisoner but was exchanged for the female relations of the Duc de Longueville; and Tavannes has written in his “memoirs:” “A poor gentleman was thus exchanged against four princesses, one a Bourbon, one of the House of Cleves, and two of that of Orleans.” At the fall of the League, Tavannes acknowledged Henry IV on condition that he should be confirmed in his dignity as a marshal of France. This promise was not kept and he withdrew from his allegiance, saying he was the King’s subject and not his slave. For this he was again committed to the Bastile from which he escaped, according to his own account, with great ease,—“A page brought me some thread and a file; I twisted the cord, filed through a bar and got away.” He was not pursued but was suffered to remain in peace in his own castle of Soilly, near Autun. The King could never tolerate Tavannes. He had been largely concerned in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, of which he is believed to have been the principal instigator and which he is supposed to have suggested to Catherine de Medicis.

Henry’s reign was abruptly terminated by his assassination in 1610. He was murdered by François Ravaillac, a native of Angoulême who was no doubt a victim of religious dementia. Having been much perturbed with visions inciting him to exhort the king to take action against the followers of the pretended reformed religion and convert them to the Roman Catholic Church, Ravaillac determined to do so. On reaching Paris he went to the Jesuits’ house near the Porte St.-Antoine and sought advice from one of the priests, Father Daubigny, who told him to put these disturbed thoughts out of his head, to say his prayers and tell his beads. He still maintained his intention of speaking to the King and addressed to him on one occasion as he drove by in his coach, but “the King put him back with a little stick and

would not hear him." Then Ravaillac changed his mind and set out for home; but on reaching Estampes, was again impelled to return to Paris—this time with homicidal intent. The would-be regicide watched for the King constantly, but thought it better to wait until after the new queen (Marie de Medicis) was crowned. He hung about the Louvre, burning to do the deed, and at last found his opportunity on the 14th of May, 1610, near the churchyard of St. Innocent. The King left the Louvre that morning in his coach unattended. One of his gentlemen had protested. "Take me, Sire, I implore you," he said, "to guard your Majesty." "No," replied the King, "I will have neither you nor the guard. I want no one." The coach was driven to the Hotel de Longueville and then to the Croix du Tiroir and so to the churchyard of St. Bartholomew. It had turned from the rue St. Honore into the rue Feronnière, a very narrow way made more so by the small shops built against the wall of the churchyard. The passage was further blocked by the approach of two carts, one laden with wine and the other with hay, and the coach was brought to a stop at the corner of the street.

Ravaillac had followed the coach from the Louvre, had seen it stop and noted that there was now no one near it and no one to interfere with him as he came close to the side of the carriage where the King was seated. Ravaillac had his cloak wrapped round his left arm to conceal a knife and creeping in between the shops and the coach as if he desired to pass by, paused there, and resting one foot upon a spoke of the wheel, the other upon a stone, leaned forward and stabbed the King. The knife entered a little above the heart between the third and fourth ribs. The King, who was reading a letter, fell over towards the Duc d'Épernon on his other side, murmuring, "I am wounded." At this moment Ravaillac, fearing that the point of his weapon had been turned aside, quickly struck a second blow at the fainting monarch, who had raised his arm slightly, thus giving the knife better chance to reach his heart. This second stroke was instantly fatal. The blood gushed from his mouth and he expired breathing a deep sigh. His Majesty's attendants, now running up, would have killed Ravaillac on the spot, but the Duc d'Épernon called out to them to secure his person, whereupon one seized the dagger, another his throat, and he was promptly handed over to the guards. The news spread that the King was dead and caused a panic. People rushed from the shops into the streets and a tumult arose which was stayed only by the prompt assurance of d'Épernon that the

King had merely fainted and was being carried to the Louvre for medical attention.

The murder created intense excitement in the city, for the King was beloved and trusted by the people as the one hope of peace after such constant strife. Sully, his faithful minister, was broken-hearted but acted with great promptitude and firmness. He brought troops forthwith into Paris and strengthened the garrison with the Swiss guards. Despair and consternation prevailed in the Louvre, where were the widowed Queen, Marie de Medicis, and the infant heir, now Louis XIII. Bassompierre, in his memoirs, tells us how he found the dead King laid out in his cabinet, surrounded by afflicted followers and weeping surgeons. Summoned to the Queen's presence, he found her in dishabille, overcome with grief, and he with others knelt to kiss her hand and assure her of his devotion. The Duc de Villeroi reasoned with her, imploring her to postpone her lamentations until she had made provision for her own and her son's safety. While the Duc de Guise was directed to bring together all the principal people to recognise and proclaim the new sovereign, the marshal proceeded to gather up all the troops and march through the city to check any signs of tumult and sedition. Meanwhile, Sully had occupied the Bastile with a force of archers and had enjoined all good subjects to swear allegiance to the throne and proclaim their readiness to give their lives to avenge Henry's murder.

With the nation in such a temper it was little likely that any mercy would be shown to Ravaillac. His trial was hurried forward in all haste and he was arraigned before the High Court of the Tournelle. Long and minute interrogatories were administered to him on the rack to extort confession of an act fully proved by eye-witnesses and of which he was duly convicted. The court declared that he was "attainted of high treason divine and human in the highest degree, for the most wicked, the most abominable parricide committed on the person of the late Henry IV, of good and laudable memory," and he was condemned in reparation to make the *amende honorable* before the principal gate of the city of Paris, "whither he shall be carried," so runs the decree, "and drawn on a tumbril in his shirt, bearing a lighted torch of two pounds weight, and there he shall make confession of his crime, of which he repents and begs pardon of God, the king and the laws. From thence he shall be carried to the Grève and, on a scaffold to be there erected, the flesh shall be torn from him with red-hot pincers ... and

after this his limbs shall be dragged by four horses, his body burnt to ashes and dispersed in the air. His goods and chattels are also declared to be forfeited and confiscated to the king. And it is further ordained that the house in which he was born shall be pulled down to the ground (the owner thereof being previously indemnified) and that no other building shall ever hereafter be erected on the foundation thereof; that within fifteen days after the publication of this present sentence his father and mother shall, by sound of trumpet and public proclamation in the city of Angoulême, be banished out of the kingdom and forbidden ever to return under the penalty of being hanged and strangled, without any further process at law. The Court has also forbidden, and doth forbid his brothers, sisters, uncles and others, from henceforth to bear the said name of Ravaillac."

The curious fact is recorded in history that Henry IV had a strong presentiment of impending fate. "I cannot tell you why, Bassompierre, but I feel satisfied I shall never go into Germany" (on a projected campaign). He repeated several times, "I believe I shall die soon." He shared his forebodings with Sully. "I shall die in this city. This ceremony of the Queen's coronation (now at hand) disturbs me. I shall die in this city; I shall never quit Paris again, they mean to kill me. Accursed coronation! I shall fall during the show." And he did die the day after it. Yet sometimes he laughed at these fears, remarking, only two days before his murder, to some of his attendants whom he overheard discussing the subject, "It is quite foolish to anticipate evil; for thirty years every astrologer and charlatan in the kingdom has predicted my death on a particular day, and here I am still alive." But on this very morning of the 14th of May, the young Duc de Vendôme brought him a fresh horoscope. The constellation under which Henry was born threatened him with great danger on this day and he was urged to pass it in sheltered retirement. The King called the astrologer a crafty old fox and the duke a young fool, and said, "My fate is in the hands of God." At the moment Ravaillac was in the vicinity of the palace, but his gestures were so wild that the guards drove him away to wait and carry out his fell deed elsewhere.

Ravaillac was no doubt the tool of others. The King's life had been threatened by courtiers near his person. Not the least active of his enemies was Madame de Verneuil, born D'Entragues, who had been at one time his mistress, but who had joined his enemies, notably the Duc d'Épernon, in

cordial detestation of his policy. Henry was at this time planning a great coalition against the overweening power of Spain and favored the concession of religious toleration throughout Europe. Madame de Verneuil had welcomed Ravaillac to Paris and commended him to the hospitality of one of her creatures, and it was proved that the murderer had been once in the service of the Duc d'Épernon.

When Henry IV fell under the assassin's knife, it was found by his will that, in the event of a minority, the regency should devolve upon Marie de Medicis, his second wife. This happened because Louis XIII, the new King, was no more than nine years of age, and once again France came under female rule. The Italian Queen Mother soon fell under the domination of two other Italians, the Concinis, husband and wife. The first, a mercenary and overbearing creature, best known as the Marquis d'Ancre, stirred up the bitterest animosity and brought the Queen into fierce conflict with the princes of the blood who rose in open rebellion. They were presently supported by the young King and a murderous plot was carried out for the marquis' assassination. It was effected in broad daylight at the entrance of the Louvre by the Baron de Vitry, a captain of the Gardes du Corps. "I have the King's order to arrest you," said De Vitry. "*À me?*" asked the astonished d'Ancre in imperfect French. "*À vous*," replied the other, taking out a pistol and shooting him down, the rest dispatching him with their swords. Louis XIII, still barely sixteen, is said to have witnessed the murder from a window of the Louvre, from which he cried, "Great thanks to all; now at last I am king."

The Prince de Condé, as leader of the insurgent princes, had been arrested and imprisoned in the palace but removed to the Bastile. The mob, greatly incensed, attacked the Louvre, but, unable to find him, failed to compass Condé's release who was now transferred in the dead of night, "without torches," to Vincennes. Concini's house was next sacked, his body dragged from the grave, carried through the streets and subjected to every indignity, his nose and ears being cut off and the corpse burned. Hatred of the Queen's foreign favorites was not yet appeased. Leonora Galigai, the Marquis d'Ancre's widow, was brought to trial, her conviction being necessary before her property and estates could be confiscated and divided. She was duly arraigned but it was impossible to prove her complicity in her husband's misdeeds or to procure conviction of any crime involving capital

punishment. The venue was therefore changed and she was accused of sorcery and witchcraft. It was said that she had attracted astrologers and magicians into France who brought with them spells and incantations, amulets, talismans, and all the apparatus of wax figures, to produce death by wasting disease. She was asked in court to confess by what magical arts she had gained her malign influence over the Queen and she replied contemptuously, “By the power that strong minds exercise over weak ones.” The case was certain to go against her, but she still hoped to escape with a sentence of banishment and it was a terrible shock when she was condemned to death for the crime of *lèse majesté*, human and divine. Yet she faced her fate with marvellous fortitude. Great crowds turned out to jeer at her as she was carried in a cart to the Place de Grève, but she maintained her composure until she saw the flames destined to consume her decapitated body, then quickly recovering herself, she met death without bravado and without fear. Her son was imprisoned for some time in the castle of Nantes and the Concini property was chiefly divided between the King and the Pope, Clement VII. Leonora Galigai had originally been the Queen’s waiting woman for several years. Of humble birth, the daughter of a carpenter, she had gained the complete confidence of her mistress by her soft voice and insinuating ways, and on coming to France, Marie de Medicis had insisted upon Leonora’s appointment as lady in waiting, although Henry absolutely refused to appoint her until the Queen gained her point by her importunities.

By this time a new power was rising above the horizon, that of the Bishop of Luçon, afterwards, and better known as, Cardinal Richelieu. The cadet of a noble but not affluent family, he was intended for the career of arms but turned cleric in order to hold the bishopric of Luçon, the presentation of which was hereditary in his house. By his talents he soon made his mark as a churchman. He was assiduous in his religious profession and an eloquent preacher, but his powerful mind and ambitious spirit presently turned him towards a political career. He arrived at Paris in 1614 as the representative of the clergy of Poitou in the States General and his insinuating manners and personal charm soon won him wide favor at Court. He was presented to the Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, by Barbin, the controller-general of finances, and by the Concinis, the above mentioned ill-fated Marquis d’Ancre and his wife, Leonora Galigai. He first became the Queen’s

chaplain and next the secretary of State for war, barely escaping the evil consequences of his intimacy with the Concinis. It is rumored in history that he knew of the intended assassination of d'Ancre the night before it occurred but neglected to give warning on the plea that he did not believe the story and thought the news would wait. When the King and his mother quarrelled and Marie de Medicis withdrew to Blois, Richelieu accompanied her and served her without at first compromising himself with Louis. He was at length ordered to leave her and retired to his bishopric. He was further exiled to the papal province of Avignon, but was suddenly recalled and forgiven. He still devoted himself to the Queen and was her chosen friend and adviser, services which she requited by securing him the cardinal's hat.

Richelieu soon showed his quality and rose step by step to the highest honors, becoming in due course, First Minister of State. His success was due throughout to his prudent, far-seeing conduct and his incomparable adroitness in managing affairs. "He was so keen and watchful," said a contemporary, "that he was never taken unawares. He slept little, worked hard, thought of everything and knew everything either by intuition or through his painstaking indefatigable spirit." He was long viewed with suspicion and dislike by the young King, but presently won his esteem by his brilliant talents. He dazzled and compelled the admiration of all, even those opposed to him. His extraordinary genius was immediately made manifest; it was enough for him to show himself. His penetrating eye, the magnetism of his presence, his dexterity in untying knots and in solving promptly the most difficult problems, enabled him to dominate all tempers and overcome all resistance. His was a singularly persuasive tongue; he had the faculty of easily and effectually proving that he was always in the right. In a word, he exercised a great personal ascendency and was as universally feared as he was implicitly obeyed by all upon whom he imposed his authority. When he was nominated First Minister, the Venetian minister in Paris wrote to his government, "Here, humanly speaking, is a new power of a solid and permanent kind; one that is little likely to be shaken or quickly crumbled away."

Richelieu's steady and consistent aim was to consolidate an absolute monarchy. Determined to conquer and crush the Huguenots he made his first attack upon La Rochelle, the great Protestant stronghold, but was

compelled to make terms with the Rochelais temporarily while he devoted himself to the abasement of the great nobles forever in opposition to and intriguing against the reigning sovereign. Headed by the princes of the blood, they continually resisted Marie de Medicis and engaged in secret conspiracy, making treasonable overtures to Spain or openly raising the standard of revolt at home. With indomitable courage and an extraordinary combination of daring and diplomacy, Richelieu conquered them completely. The secret of his success has been preserved in his own words, "I undertake nothing that I have not thoroughly thought out in advance; when I have once made up my mind I stick to it with unchangeable firmness, sweeping away all obstacles before me and treading them down under foot till they lie paralysed under my red robe."

Richelieu, in thus strenuously fighting for his policy, which he conceived was in the best interests of France, made unsparing use of the weapons placed at his disposal for coercing his enemies. Foremost amongst these were the prisons of state, the Bastile, Vincennes and the rest, which he filled with prisoners, breaking them with repression, retribution, or more or less permanent removal from the busy scene. Year after year the long procession passed in through the gloomy portals, in numbers far exceeding the movement outward, for few went out except to make the short journey to the scaffold. The Cardinal's victims were many. Amongst the earliest offenders upon whom his hand fell heavily in the very first year of his ministry, were those implicated in the Ornano-Chalais conspiracy. The object of this was to remove the King's younger brother, Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, generally known as "Monsieur," out of the hands of the Court and set him up as a pretender to the throne in opposition to Louis XIII. Richelieu, in his memoirs, speaks of this as "the most fearful conspiracy mentioned in history, both as regards the number concerned and the horror of the design, which was to raise their master (Monsieur) above his condition and abase the sacred person of the King." The Cardinal himself was to have been a victim and was to be murdered at his castle of Fleury, six miles from Fontainebleau. When the plot was betrayed, the King sent a body of troops to Fleury and the Queen a number of her attendants. The conspirators were forestalled and the ringleaders arrested. The Marshal d'Ornano was taken at Fontainebleau and with him his brother and some of his closest confidants. The Marquis de Chalais, who was of the famous

house of Talleyrand, was caught in the act at Fleury, to which he had proceeded for the commission of the deed. He confessed his crime. There were those who pretended at the time that the plot was fictitious, invented by Richelieu in order to get rid of some of his most active enemies. In any case, the Marshal d'Ornano died in the Bastile within three months of his arrest and it was generally suspected that he had been poisoned, although Richelieu would not allow it was other than a natural death. Chalais had been sent to Nantes, where he was put on trial, convicted, sentenced to death and eventually executed. The execution was carried out with great barbarity, for the headsman was clumsy and made thirty-two strokes with his sword before he could effect decapitation.

The two Vendômes, Caesar, the eldest, and his brother, the Grand Prior, were concerned in the Ornano-Chalais conspiracy. Caesar was the eldest son of Henri IV by Gabrielle d'Estrées, but was legitimised and created a duke by his father, with precedence immediately after the princes of the blood. Although Louis' half-brother, he was one of his earliest opponents. After the detection of the plot he was cast into the prison of Vincennes, where he remained for four years (1626-30), but was released on surrendering the government of Brittany and accepting exile. He was absent for eleven years, but on again returning to France was accused of an attempt to poison Cardinal Richelieu and again banished until that minister's death. He could not bring himself to submit to existing authority, and once more in France became one of the leaders of the party of the "Importants" and was involved in the disgrace of the Duc de Beaufort, his son. Having made his peace with Cardinal Mazarin in 1650, he was advanced to several offices, among others to those of Governor of Burgundy and Superintendent of Navigation. He helped to pacify Guienne and took Bordeaux. The Grand Prior, his brother, became a Knight of Malta and saw service early at the siege of Candia, where he showed great courage. He made the campaign of Holland under Louis XIV, after having been involved with Chalais, and throughout showed himself a good soldier.

Richelieu's penalties were sometimes inflicted on other grounds than self-defense and personal animosity. The disturbers of public peace he treated as enemies of the State. Thus he laid a heavy hand on all who were concerned in affairs of honor whether death ensued or not. His own elder brother had been killed in a duel, and he abhorred a practice which had so long

decimated the country. It was calculated that in one year alone four thousand combatants had perished. King Henry IV had issued the most severe edicts against it and had created a tribunal of marshals empowered to examine into and arrange all differences between gentlemen. One of these edicts of 1602, prohibiting duels, laid down as a penalty for the offense, the confiscation of property and the imprisonment of the survivors. A notorious duellist, De Bouteville, felt the weight of the Cardinal's hand. He must have been a quarrelsome person for he fought on twenty-one occasions. After the last quarrel he retired into Flanders and was challenged by a Monsieur de Beuvron. They returned to Paris where they fought in the Place Royale, and Bussy d'Amboise, one of Beuvron's seconds, was killed by one of De Bouteville's. The survivors fled but were pursued and captured, with the result that De Bouteville was put upon his trial before the regular courts. He was convicted and condemned to death. All the efforts on the part of influential friends, royal personages included, to obtain pardon having proved unavailing, he suffered in the Place de Grève. The pugnacity of this De Bouteville was attributed by many to homicidal mania, and one nobleman declared that he would decline a challenge from him unless it was accompanied by a medical certificate of sanity. He had killed a number of his opponents and his reputation was such that when he established a fencing school at his residence in Paris all the young noblemen flocked there to benefit by his lessons.

Richelieu used the Bastile for all manner of offenders. One was the man Farican, of whom he speaks in his "Memoirs" as "a visionary consumed with vague dreams of a coming republic. All his ends were bad, all his means wicked and detestable.... His favorite occupation was the inditing of libellous pamphlets against the government, rendering the King odious, exciting sedition and aiming at subverting the tranquillity of the State. Outwardly a priest, he held all good Catholics in detestation and acted as a secret spy of the Huguenots." An Englishman found himself in the Bastile for being at cross purposes with the Cardinal. This was a so-called Chevalier Montagu, son of the English Lord Montagu and better known as "Wat" Montagu, who was much employed as a secret political agent between England and France. Great people importuned the Cardinal to release Montagu. "The Duke of Lorraine," says Richelieu, "has never ceased to beg this favor. He began with vain threats and then, with words

more suitable to his position, sent the Prince of Phalsbourg to Paris for the third time to me to grant this request." The Duke having been gratified with this favor came in person to Paris to thank the King. An entry in an English sheet dated April 20th, 1628, runs, "The Earl of Carlisle will not leave suddenly because Walter Montagu is set free from France and has arrived at our court. The King says he has done him exceeding good service." It was Montagu who brought good news from Rochelle to the Duke of Buckingham on the very day he was assassinated. Later in October, Montagu had a conference with Richelieu as to the exchange of prisoners at Rochelle.

Richelieu's upward progress had not been unimpeded. The Queen Mother became his bitter enemy. Marie de Medicis was disappointed in him. He had not proved the humble, docile creature she looked for in one whom she had raised so high and her jealousy intensified as his power grew. She was a woman of weak character and strong passions, easily led astray by designing favorites, as was seen in the case of the Concinis, and there is little doubt that the Maréchal d'Ancre was her lover. After his murder she was estranged from Louis XIII, but was reconciled and joined with Richelieu's enemies in ceaselessly importuning the King to break with his too powerful minister. She was backed by Anne of Austria, the wife of Louis XIII; by "Monsieur," the Duc d'Orleans and a swarm of leading courtiers in her efforts to sacrifice Richelieu. The conflict ended in the so-called "Day of Dupes," when the minister turned the tables triumphantly upon his enemies. Louis had retired to his hunting lodge near Versailles to escape from his perplexities and Richelieu followed him there, obtained an audience and put his own case before the King, whom he dazzled by unveiling his great schemes, and easily regained the mastery. His enemies were beaten and like craven hounds came to lick his feet; and like hounds, at once felt the whip.

One of the first to suffer was the Queen Mother. She had no friends. Every one hated her; her son, her creatures and supporters,—and the King again sent her into exile, this time to Compiègne, where she was detained for a time. She presently escaped and left France to wander through Europe, first to Brussels, then to London and last of all to Cologne, where she died in a garret in great penury. Marie de Medicis' had been an unhappy life. Misfortune met her on the moment she came to France, for the King, her

bridegroom, who had divorced his first wife, Marguerite de Valois, in the hopes of an heir by another wife, was much disappointed when he saw Marie de Medicis. She was by no means so good looking as he had been led to believe. She was tall, with a large coarse figure, and had great round staring eyes. There was nothing softly feminine and caressing in her ways, she had no gaiety of manner and was not at all the woman to attract or amuse the King's roving fancy,—the *vert galant*, the gay deceiver of a thousand errant loves. Yet he was willing to be good friends and was strongly drawn to her after the birth of the Dauphin, but was soon repelled again by her violent temper and generally detestable character. The establishment of the Jesuits in France was Marie's doing. She was suspected of duplicity in Henry's assassination, but the foul charge rests on no good grounds. After becoming Regent, she alienated the nobility by her favoritism and exasperated the people by her exorbitant tax levies to provide money for her wasteful extravagance and the prodigal gifts she bestowed. The one merit she possessed in common with her house was her patronage of arts and letters. She inspired the series of famous allegorical pictures, twenty-one in number, painted by Rubens, embodying the life of Marie de Medicis.

There was no love lost between the Cardinal and the Maréchal Bassompierre, who paid the penalty for being on the wrong side in the famous "Day of Dupes" and found himself committed for a long imprisonment in the Bastile. The Marshal had offended Richelieu by penetrating his designs against the nobility. When asked what he thought of the prospect of taking La Rochelle, he had answered, "It would be a mad act for us, for we shall enable the Cardinal, when he has overcome the Calvinists, to turn all his strength against our order." It was early in 1631 that danger to his person began to threaten him. He was warned by the Duc d'Épernon that the Queen Mother, of whose party Bassompierre was, had been arrested and that others, including himself, were likely to get into trouble. The Marshal asked the Duc d'Épernon for his advice, who strongly urged him to get away, offering him at the same time a loan of fifty thousand crowns as a provision until better days came. The Marshal refused this kind offer but resolved to present himself before the King and stand his ground. He would not compromise himself by a flight which would draw suspicion down on him and call his loyalty in question. He had served

France faithfully for thirty years and was little inclined now that he was fifty to seek his fortune elsewhere. “I had given my King the best years of my life and was willing to sacrifice my liberty to him, feeling sure that it would be restored on better appreciation of my loyal services.”

Bassompierre prepared for the worst like a man of the world. “I rose early next day and proceeded to burn more than six thousand love-letters received from ladies to whom I had paid my addresses. I was afraid that if arrested my papers would be seized and examined and some of these letters might compromise my old friends.” He entered his carriage and drove to Senlis where the King was in residence. Here he met the Duc de Gramont and others who told him he would certainly be arrested. Bassompierre again protested that he had nothing on his conscience. The King received him civilly enough and talked to him at length about the disagreement of the Queen Mother with Cardinal Richelieu, and then Bassompierre asked point blank whether the King owed him any grudge. “How can you think such a thing,” replied the treacherous monarch. “You know I am your friend,” and left him. That evening the Marshal supped with the Duc de Longueville and the King came in afterwards. “Then I saw plainly enough,” says Bassompierre, “that the King had something against me, for he kept his head down, and touching the strings of his guitar, never looked at me nor spoke a single word. Next morning I rose at six o’clock and as I was standing before the fire in my dressing-room, M. de Launay, Lieutenant of the Body-Guard, entered my room and said, ‘Sir, it is with tears in my eyes and with a bleeding heart that I, who, for twenty years have served under you, am obliged to tell you that the King has ordered me to arrest you.’

“I experienced very little emotion and replied: ‘Sir, you will have no trouble, as I came here on purpose, having been warned. I have all my life submitted to the wishes of the King, who can dispose of me or my liberty as he thinks fit.’... Shortly afterwards one of the King’s carriages arrived in front of my lodging with an escort of mounted musketeers and thirty light horsemen. I entered the carriage alone with De Launay. Then we drove off, keeping two hundred paces in front of the escort, as far as the Porte St.-Martin, where we turned off to the left, and I was taken to the Bastile. I dined with the Governor, M. du Tremblay, whom I afterwards accompanied to the chamber which had been occupied by the Prince de Condé, and in this I was shut up with one servant.

“On the 26th, M. du Tremblay came to see me on the part of the King, saying that his Majesty had not caused me to be arrested for any fault that I had committed, holding me to be a good servant, but for fear I should be led into mischief, and he assured me that I should not remain long in prison, which was a great consolation. He also told me that the King had ordered him to allow me every liberty but that of leaving the Bastile. He added another chamber to my lodging for the accommodation of my domestics. I retained only two valets and a cook, and passed two months without leaving my room, and I should not have gone out at all had I not been ill.... The King, it seems, had gone on a voyage as far as Dijon, and on his return to Paris I implored my liberty, but all in vain. I fell ill in the Bastile of a very dangerous swelling, due to the want of fresh air and exercise and I began therefore to walk regularly on the terrace of the Bastion.”

Bassompierre was destined to see a good deal of that terrace, for the years slowly dragged themselves along with hope constantly deferred and no fulfilment of the promises of freedom so glibly extended to him. He was arrested in 1631 and in the following year heard he would in all probability be released at once; but, as he says, he was told this merely to redouble his sufferings. Next year he had great hope of regaining his liberty and Marshal Schomberg sent him word that on the return of the King to Paris he should leave the Bastile. This year they deprived him of a portion of his salary and he was greatly disheartened, feeling “that he was to be eternally detained and from that time forth he lost all hope except in God.” Two years later (1635) the Governor, Monsieur du Tremblay, congratulated him on his approaching release and the rumor was so strong that a number of friends came every day to the Bastile to see if he was still there. These encouraging stories were repeated from month to month without any good result, and at length Père Joseph, “his gray eminence,” Richelieu’s most confidential friend and brother of Monsieur du Tremblay, being at the Bastile, promised the Marshal to speak to the Cardinal on his behalf. “I put no faith in him,” writes Bassompierre, and indeed nothing more was heard for a couple of years, but we find in the Marshal’s journal an entry to the effect that the King had told the Cardinal it weighed on his conscience for having kept him in prison so long, seeing that there was nothing against him. “To which,” says Bassompierre, “the Cardinal replied that he had so many things on his mind he could not remember the reason for the imprisonment

or why he (Richelieu) had advised it, but he would consult his papers and show them to the King." The poor Marshal's dejection increased, having been detained so long in the Bastile, "where he had nothing to do but pray God to speedily put an end to his long misery by liberty or death."

The imprisonment outlasted the journal which ends in 1640, and it was not until the death of the Cardinal in 1642 that he at length obtained his release, just eleven years after his first committal to prison. He at once presented himself at Court and was graciously received by the King who asked him his age. "Fifty," replied Bassompierre, "for I cannot count the years passed in the Bastile as they were not spent in your Majesty's service." He did not enjoy his freedom long, for he soon afterwards died from an apoplectic seizure.

CHAPTER V
THE PEOPLE AND THE BASTILE

Anne of Austria—Her servant Laporte—Clandestine communication in the Bastile—Birth of Dauphin, afterward Louis XIV—Cinq Mars—His conspiracy—Richelieu's death—His character and achievements—Dubois the alchemist—Regency of Anne of Austria—Mazarin's influence—The "Importants"—Imprisonment and escape of Duc de Beaufort—Growth of the Fronde—Attacks on Bastile—De Retz in Vincennes—Made Archbishop of Paris while in prison—Peace restored—Mazarin's later rule benign.

Richelieu throughout his ministry was exposed to the bitter enmity of the Opposition; his enemies, princes and great nobles, were continually plotting to take his life. The King's brother, Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, intrigued incessantly against him, supported by Anne of Austria, queen of Louis XIII, who was ever in treasonable correspondence with the King of Spain. Richelieu, whose power waned for a time, strongly urged the Queen's arrest and trial, but no more was done than to commit her most confidential servant, Laporte, to the Bastile. The Queen herself was terrified into submission and made solemn confession of her misdeeds. She did not tell all, however, and it was hoped more might be extorted from Laporte by the customary pressure. It was essential to warn Laporte, but he was in a dungeon far beneath one of the towers and access to him seemed impossible. The story is preserved,—an almost incredible one, but vouched for in Laporte's "Memoirs,"—that a letter was conveyed to Laporte by the assistance of another prisoner, the Chevalier de Jars. The letter was conveyed to De Jars by one of the Queen's ladies disguised as a servant, and he managed by boring a hole in his floor to pass it to the room below. Here the occupants were friends, and in like manner they dug into the dungeon beneath them, with the result that Laporte was eventually reached in his subterranean cell. Fortified now by the fact of the Queen's avowal, Laporte conducted himself so well that the most searching examination elicited no further proofs. The process followed was in due course detected and Richelieu was heard to lament that he did not possess so faithful a servant as Laporte.

The Chevalier de Jars, above mentioned, had been long an inmate of the Bastile, being concerned with the keeper of the seals, Chateauneuf, in a plot to convey Marie de Medicis and the King's brother, Gaston, to England. No proof was forthcoming as to Jars's complicity with Chateauneuf, and he was treated with the utmost cruelty in order to extort confession. He was imprisoned in a fetid dungeon till his clothes rotted off his back, his hair and nails grew to a frightful length and he was nearly starved to death. Père Joseph, the Cardinal's *alter ego*, the famous "grey eminence," constantly visited him to make sure that this rigorous treatment was carried out. At length the Chevalier was taken out for examination, to which he was subjected eighty times, and threatened first with torture and then with capital punishment. At last he was warned that he must die and was removed to the place of execution. Pardon, however, was extended to him just as the axe was raised. Still the Chevalier refused to make any revelation. He was taken back to the Bastile, but he was no longer harshly treated. De Jars seems to have won the favor of Charles I, of England, whose queen, Henrietta Maria, wrote to Richelieu begging for the prisoner's release. This came in 1638, apparently a little after the episode of the clandestine letter described above.

The birth of a son, afterwards Louis XIV, put an end to the worst of these court intrigues. Gaston d'Orleans lost his position as heir presumptive and the King, while still hating Richelieu, trusted him more and more with the conduct of affairs. Fortune smiled upon the French arms abroad. Richelieu had made short work of his principal enemies and he was now practically unassailable. No one could stand against him and the King was simply his servant. Louis XIII would gladly have shaken himself free from his imperious minister's tyranny, but the King's health was failing and he could only listen to whispers of the fresh plots which he was too weak to discountenance and forbid. The last of these was the celebrated conspiracy of Cinq Mars, well known in history, but still better known in romantic literature as the subject of the famous novel by Alfred de Vigny, named after the central figure. Richelieu, needing an ally near the King's person, had selected Henri Cinq Mars, youngest son of the Marquis d'Effiat, a handsome, vain youth who quickly grew into the King's graces and was much petted and much spoiled. The young Cinq Mars, no more than nineteen, amused the King by sharing his silly pleasures, teaching him to

snare magpies and helping him to carve wooden toys. Cinq Mars was appointed master of the horse and was greatly flattered and made much of at court. His head was soon turned and filled with ambitious dreams. He aspired to the hand of the Princess Marie de Gonzague of the house of Nevers and made a formal proposition of himself to Richelieu. The Cardinal laughed contemptuously at his absurd pretensions, and earned in return the bitter hatred of Cinq Mars. The breach was widened by the King's bad taste in introducing his favorite at a conference of the Privy Council. Richelieu quietly acquiesced but afterwards gave Cinq Mars a bit of his mind, gaining thereby redoubled dislike. From that time forth Cinq Mars was resolved to overthrow the Cardinal. He found ready support from the Duc d'Orleans and the Duc de Bouillon, while the King himself was not deaf to the hints of a speedy release from Richelieu's thraldom. Only the Queen, Anne of Austria, stood aloof and was once more on friendly terms with the Cardinal. A secret treaty had been entered into with Philip IV of Spain, who was to further the aims of the conspirators by sending troops into France. The two countries were then at war and it was high treason to enter into dealings with Spain. Just when the plot was ripe for execution an anonymous packet was brought to Richelieu at Tarascon, whither he had proceeded with the King to be present at the relief of Perpignan. This packet contained a facsimile of the traitorous treaty with Philip IV and Cinq Mars's fate was sealed. The King with great reluctance signed an order for the arrest of Cinq Mars, who was taken in the act of escaping on horseback.

De Thou, another of the conspirators, was taken with the Duc de Bouillon, while the Duc d'Orleans fled into Auvergne and wandered to and fro, proscribed and in hiding. The only crime that could be advanced against De Thou was that he was privy to the plot and had taken no steps to reveal it. Cinq Mars was now abandoned by the King, who left him to the tender mercies of Richelieu. This resulted in his being brought to trial at Lyons, but he contrived to send a message appealing for mercy to the King. It reached the foolish, fickle monarch when he was in the act of making toffy in a saucepan over the fire. "No, no, I will give Cinq Mars no audience," said Louis, "his soul is as black as the bottom of this pan." Cinq Mars suffered on the block and comported himself with a fortitude that won him sympathy; for it was remembered that his faults had been fostered by the exaggerated favoritism shown him. De Thou was also decapitated after his

associate, and, not strangely, was unnerved by the sight which he had witnessed. The Duc de Bouillon was pardoned at the price of surrendering his ancestral estate of Sedan to the Crown.

This was Richelieu's last act of retaliation. He returned to Paris stricken with mortal disease. He travelled by slow stages in a litter borne by twelve gentlemen of his entourage, who marched bareheaded. On reaching Paris, he rapidly grew worse and Louis XIII paid him a farewell visit on his deathbed. On taking leave of his master he reminded him of the singular services he had rendered France, saying: "In taking my leave of your Majesty I behold your kingdom at the highest pinnacle it has hitherto reached and all your enemies have been banished or removed." The tradition is preserved that upon this solemn occasion he strenuously urged the King to appoint Mazarin as his successor. The Italian cardinal was brought into the Council the day after Richelieu's death and from the first appears to have exercised a strong influence over the King. The means and methods of the two statesmen were in great contrast. Richelieu imposed his will by sheer force of character and the terror he inspired. Mazarin, soft-mannered and supple-backed, worked with infinite patience and triumphed by duplicity and astuteness.

Richelieu's constant aim was to establish the absolute power of the monarchy, and to aggrandize France among nations. His internal government was arbitrary and often extremely cruel and he was singularly deficient in financial ability. He had no idea of raising money but by the imposition of onerous taxes and never sought to enrich France by encouraging industries and developing the natural resources of the country. A strong, self-reliant, highly intelligent and gifted man, he was nevertheless a slave to superstition and the credulous dupe of fraudulent impostures. It will always be remembered against him that he believed in alchemy and the virtue of the so-called philosopher's stone; yet more, that he was responsible for the persecution and conviction of Urban Grandier, a priest condemned as a magician, charged with bewitching the nuns of Poictou. It was gravely asserted that these simple creatures were possessed of devils through the malignant influence of Grandier, and many pious ecclesiastics were employed to exorcise the evil spirits.

The story as it comes down to us would be farcical and absurd were it not so repulsively horrible. The nuns believed to be afflicted were clearly the victims of emotional hysteria. They exhibited the strangest and most extravagant grimaces and contortions, were thrown into convulsions and foamed and slavered at the mouth. The ceremony of exorcism was carried out with great solemnity, and it is seriously advanced that the admonition had such surprising effects that the devils straightway took flight into the air. The whole story was conveyed to Cardinal Richelieu by his familiar, Père Joseph, who declared that he had seen the evil spirits at work and had observed many nuns and lay-sisters when they were possessed. The Cardinal thereupon gave orders for Grandier's arrest and trial, which was conducted with great prolixity and unfairness. The evidence adduced against him was preposterous. Among other statements, it was claimed that he exhibited a number of the devil's marks upon his body and that he was so impervious to pain that when a needle was thrust into him to the depth of an inch, it had no effect and no blood issued. Grandier's defence was a solemn denial of the charges, but according to the existing procedure, he was put to the "question," subjected to most cruel torture, ordinary and extraordinary, to extort confession of the guilt which he would not acknowledge. He was in due course formally convicted of the crimes of magic and sorcery and sentenced to make the *amende honorable*; to be led to the public place of Holy Cross in Loudun and there bound to a stake on a wooden pile and burned alive. The records state that he bore his punishment with constancy accompanied with great self-denial, and declare that a certain unaffected air of piety which hypocrisy cannot counterfeit was shown in his aspect. On the other hand one bigoted chronicler of the period declares that, during the ceremony, a flying insect like a wasp was observed to buzz about Grandier's head. This gave a monk occasion to say that it was Beelzebub hovering around him to carry away his soul to hell,—this for the reason that Beelzebub signifies in Hebrew the god of flies.

It is difficult to understand how Richelieu could suffer himself to be beguiled into accepting the promises made by an unscrupulous adventurer to turn the baser metals into gold. But for a space he certainly believed in Noël Pigard Dubois, a man who, after following for some time his father's profession of surgery, abandoned it in order to go to the Levant, where he spent four years in the study of occult science. On returning to Paris he

employed his time in the same pursuit, chiefly associating with dissolute characters. A sudden fit of devotion made him enter a monastery, but he soon grew tired of the irksome restraints he there experienced, and, scaling the walls of his retreat, effected his escape. Three years after this he once more resolved to embrace a monastic life, took the vows and was ordained a priest. In this new course he persevered for ten years, at the end of which time he fled to Germany, became a Lutheran, and devoted himself to the quest of the philosopher's stone.

Dissatisfied with this mode of life, he again visited Paris, abjured the Protestant religion, and married under a fictitious name. As he now boldly asserted that he had discovered the secret of making gold, he soon grew into repute and was at last introduced to Richelieu and the King, both of whom, with singular gullibility, gave full credence to his pretensions. It was arranged that Dubois should perform the "great work" in the Louvre, the King, the Queen, the Cardinal, and other illustrious personages of the court being present. In order to lull all suspicion, Dubois requested that some one might be appointed to watch his proceedings. Accordingly Saint-Amour, one of the King's body-guard, was selected for this purpose. Musket balls, given by a soldier together with a grain of the "powder for projection," were placed in a crucible covered with cinders and the furnace fire was soon raised to a proper heat. When Dubois declared the transmutation accomplished, he requested the King to blow off the ashes from the crucible. This Louis did with so much ardor that he nearly blinded the Queen and the courtiers with the dust he raised. But when his efforts were rewarded by seeing at the bottom of the crucible the lump of gold which by wonderful sleight of hand Dubois had contrived to introduce into it, despite the presence of so many witnesses, the King warmly embraced the alchemist. Then he ennobled him and appointed him president of the treasury.

Dubois repeated the same trick several times with equal success. But an obstacle which he might from the first have anticipated occurred. He soon grew unable to satisfy the eager demands of his protectors, who longed for something more substantial than insignificant lumps of gold. Some idea of their avidity may be conceived when it is known that Richelieu alone required him to furnish a weekly sum of about £25,000. Although Dubois asked for a delay, which he obtained, he was of course unable to comply

with these extravagant demands, and was in consequence imprisoned in Vincennes, whence he was transferred to the Bastile. The vindictive minister, unwilling to acknowledge that he had been duped, instead of punishing Dubois as an impostor, accused him of practising magic and appointed a commission to try him. As the unhappy alchemist persisted in asserting his innocence he was put to the torture. His sufferings induced him in order to gain respite to offer to fulfil the promises with which he had formerly deceived his patrons. Their credulity was apparently not yet exhausted, for they allowed him to make another experiment. Having again failed in this, he confessed his imposture, was sentenced to death and accordingly perished on the scaffold.

A host of warring elements was forced into fresh activity by the death of Richelieu, soon followed by that of the King. Louis XIII, in his will, bequeathed the regency to his widowed Queen, Anne of Austria, and her accession to power stirred up many active malcontents all eager to dispute it. The feudal system had faded, but the great nobles still survived and were ready to fight again for independence if the executive were weakened; while parliaments were ready to claim a voice in government and curtail the prerogatives not yet wholly conceded to the sovereign. The long minority of Louis XIV was a period of continual intrigue. France was torn by party dissension and cursed with civil war. If we would understand the true state of affairs and realise the part played by the two great prisons, Vincennes and the Bastile, and the principal personages incarcerated within their walls, a brief résumé of events will prove helpful.

Anne of Austria was not a woman of commanding ability. She was kind hearted, well-intentioned, of sufficiently noble character to forget her own likes and dislikes, and really desirous of ruling in the best interests of the country. Her situation was one of extraordinary difficulty and, not strangely, she was inclined to lean upon the best support that seemed to offer itself. Cardinal Mazarin was a possible successor to Richelieu and well fitted to continue that powerful minister’s policy. The Queen was willing to give Mazarin her full confidence and was aghast when he talked of withdrawing permanently to Rome. She now desired him to remain and take charge of the ship of state, but his elevation gave great umbrage to his many opponents at court, and the desire to undermine, upset and even to assassinate Mazarin was the cause of endless intrigues and conspiracies.

The cabal of the “Importants” was the first to overcome. It consisted of Richelieu’s chief victims now returned from banishment, or released from gaol; princes of the blood and great nobles aiming at recovered influence, and the Queen’s favorites counting upon her unabated friendship. They gave themselves such airs and their pretensions were so high that they gained the ironical sobriquet of “the important people.” Mazarin, when they threatened him, made short work of them. The Duc de Beaufort, second son of the Duc de Vendôme, handsome of person but an inordinate swaggerer, whose rough manners and coarse language had gained him the epithet of “King of the Markets,” was arrested and shut up in Vincennes. Intriguing duchesses were once more exiled and the principal nobles sent to vegetate on their estates. A new power now arose; that of the victorious young general, the Duc d’Enghien, the eldest son of the Prince de Condé, afterwards known as the “great Condé.” He became the hero of the hour and so great was his popularity that had he been less self-confident and more willing to join forces with the Duc d’Orleans, “Monsieur,” the young King’s uncle, he would have become a dangerous competitor to Mazarin. D’Enghien soon succeeded to the family honors and continued to win battles and to be an unknown quantity in politics capable at any time of throwing his weight on either side.

The next serious conflict was with the Parliament of Paris, ever eager to vindicate its authority and importance and to claim control of the financial administration of France. The French treasury was as ill-managed as ever and the Parliament was resolved to oppose the proposed taxation. Extreme misery prevailed in the land. The peasants were ground down into the most wretched poverty, and were said to have “nothing left to them but their souls; and these also would have been seized, but that they would fetch nothing at the hammer.” The Parliament backed up the cry for reform, and Mazarin, to check and intimidate it, decided to arrest two of its most prominent members. The aged Broussel was sent to the Bastile and Blancmesnil was thrown into the castle of Vincennes.

These arbitrary acts drove the Parisian populace into open revolt. Broussel’s immediate release was demanded and obstinately refused until the disturbances increased and barricades were formed, when the Queen, at last terrified, surrendered her prisoner. The next day she left Paris, taking the young King with her, declaring that she would return with troops to enforce

submission. Condé, who had returned from the army with fresh successes, advised conciliation, being secretly anxious to support those who would cripple the growing authority of Mazarin. Peace was restored, at least on the surface, and the Queen once more returned to Paris. But she was almost a prisoner in her palace and when she appeared in public her carriage was followed by a hooting mob. She again planned to disappear from Paris and send the royal army to blockade it. In the dead of a winter's night the whole court, carrying the King, fled to St. Germain where no preparations had been made to receive them. For days they were short of food, fuel and the commonest necessaries. But a stern message was dispatched to the people of Paris, intimating the immediate advance of a body of twelve thousand troops. The capital was abashed but not greatly alarmed, and was prepared for defence and for the support of Parliament. The question of the moment was that of leadership, and choice lay between the Prince de Condé, the great Condé's brother, and the Duc d'Elboeuf, who was appointed with the certainty that Condé would not submit to him.

The Duc de Beaufort was also available, for he had succeeded in escaping from Vincennes. A brief account of his evasion may well find place here. Chavigny, a former minister, was governor of the prison, and no friend to Beaufort. But Cardinal Mazarin did not trust to that, and special gaolers were appointed to ensure the prince's safe custody. Ravile, an officer of the King's body-guard, and six or seven troopers kept him constantly under eye, and slept in the prisoner's room. Beaufort was not permitted to retain his own servants about him, but his friends managed to secure the employment of a valet, supposed to be in hiding to escape the consequences of a fatal duel in which he had killed his man. This mysterious retainer exhibited the most violent dislike of Beaufort and treated him openly with insolent rudeness. On the day of Pentecost, when many of the guards were absent at mass, Beaufort was permitted to exercise on the gallery below the level of his regular apartment, with a single companion, an officer of the Garde du Corps. The valet above mentioned had taken his seat at table with the rest, but suddenly rose, feigning illness, and leaving the dining room locked the door behind him. Rejoining the Duke the two threw themselves upon the officer, whom they overpowered and bound and gagged. A ladder of ropes, already prepared, was produced and fastened to the bars of the window, and the fugitives went down into the moat by means of it.

Meanwhile, half a dozen confederates had been stationed below and beyond the moat to assist in the escape, and were in waiting, watching the descent. Unfortunately the ladder proved too short by some feet. A long drop was necessary, in which Beaufort, a stalwart figure, fell heavily and was so seriously hurt that he fainted. Further progress was arrested until he regained consciousness. Then a cord was thrown across the moat and the Prince was dragged over by his attendants, who carried him to a neighboring wood where he was met by fifty armed men on horseback. He mounted, although in great bodily pain, and galloped off, forgetting his sufferings in his delight at freedom regained. Beaufort fled to a distant estate of his father's, where he remained in safety until the sword was drawn, when he promptly proceeded to Paris and was received with open arms after his imprisonment and long absence. His popularity was widespread and extravagantly manifested. The market women in particular lavished signs of affection on him and smothered him with kisses. Later, when it was believed that he had been poisoned by Mazarin and had applied to the doctors for an antidote, the mob was convulsed with alarm at his illness. Immense crowds surrounded the Hotel de Vendôme. So great was the concourse, so deep the anxiety that the people were admitted to see him lying pale and suffering on his bed; and many of them threw themselves on their knees by his bedside and wept pitifully, calling him the saviour of his country.

The moving spirit of the Fronde was really Gondi, better known afterwards as Cardinal de Retz, who had been appointed Coadjutor-Archbishop of Paris. He was a strange character who played many parts, controlled great affairs, exercised a supreme authority and dictated terms to the Crown. His youth had been stormy, and although he was an ordained ecclesiastic, he hated the religious profession. He led a vicious, irregular life, was a libertine and conspirator, fought a couple of duels and tried to abduct a cousin. None of these evil deeds could release him from his vows, and being permanently, arbitrarily committed to the Church, his ambition led him to seek distinction in it. Studying theology deeply and inclining to polemics, he became a noted disputant, argued points of doctrine in public with a Protestant and won him back to the bosom of the Catholic Church. It was Louis XIII who, on his death-bed, in reward for this conversion, named him Coadjutor. Gondi was possessed of great eloquence and preached

constantly in the cathedral to approving congregations. He was essentially a demagogue on the side of the popular faction. Despite his often enthusiastic following, his position was generally precarious, and when the opposing parties made peace he fell into disgrace. In the midst of his thousand intrigues he was suddenly arrested and carried to Vincennes as a prisoner. When at length he escaped from Nantes, to which he had been transferred, his reappearance produced no effect and he wandered to and fro through Europe, neglected and despised. His only fame rests on a quality he esteemed the least, that of literary genius, for his "Memoirs," which he wrote in the quiet years of latter life, still hold a high place in French literature.

The wars of the Fronde lasted with varying fortunes for five distressful years. This conflict owed its name to the boyish Parisian game of slinging stones. The sling, or *fronde*, was the weapon they used and the combatants continually gathered to throw stones at each other, quickly dispersing at the appearance of the watch. The Queen was implacably resolved to coerce the insurgents. The Parisians, full of fight, raised men and money in seemingly resolute, but really half-hearted resistance. Condé commanded the royal army, blockaded Paris for six weeks and starved the populace into submission. The earlier successes had been with the city. The Bastile had been attacked and its governor, Monsieur du Tremblay, the brother of Père Joseph, "His Grey Eminence," capitulated, hopeless of holding out with his small garrison of twenty-two men. The conflict never rose above small skirmishes and trifling battles. The civic forces had no military value. The streets were filled with light-hearted mobs who watched their leaders disporting gaily in dances and entertainments at the Hotel de Ville. Condé, on the other hand, was in real earnest. He attacked the suburbs and carried serious war into the heart of the city. The insurgents prepared to treat, and Mazarin, who feared that the surrender of Paris to Condé would make that prince dictator of France, consented. He agreed to grant an amnesty, to reduce taxation and bring the King back to Paris.

Condé now went into opposition. He posed as the saviour of the Court, and as the nobles crowded round him he grew more and more overbearing. Mazarin had now secured the support of Gondi by promising to obtain for him the Cardinal's hat and he detached the other leaders of the Fronde by liberal bribes. The final stroke was the sudden arrest of Condé and with him

two other princes, Conti and Longueville. The volatile Parisians were overjoyed at the sight of the great general being escorted to Vincennes. Peace might have been permanently established had not Mazarin played the Coadjutor false by now refusing him the Cardinal's hat, and Gondi therefore incited his friends to fresh rebellion. A strong combination insisted upon the dismissal of Mazarin and the release of the three princes. They had been removed for safe custody to Havre, where Mazarin went in person to set them free. He would have made terms with them, but they resisted his advances and returned to Paris in triumph, where the Parliament during Mazarin's absence had condemned Mazarin to death in effigy. Mazarin now withdrew altogether from France to Cologne where he still directed the Queen's policy. A fresh conflict was imminent. Gondi was gained by a new promise of a Cardinalate for him and the opposing forces gathered together for war.

Condé was now hostile. With him were Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, the Dukes of Beaufort and Nemours and other great nobles. Gaston's daughter, the intrepid, "Grande Mademoiselle," above all feminine weakness, took personal command of a part of the army. Turenne, one of the greatest soldiers of his time, led the royal troops against her. Condé made a bold but fruitless attempt to capture the Court. He then marched on Paris pursued by Turenne's forces. A fight ensued in the suburb of Saint Antoine, where Condé became entangled and was likely to be overwhelmed. He was saved by the "Grande Mademoiselle," who helped him to carry his troops through Paris and covered the movement by entering the Bastile in person, the guns of which were opened upon the royal troops. This was the final action in the civil war. The people, wearied of conflict, clamored loudly for peace. One obstacle was the doubtful attitude of Cardinal de Retz, who throughout this later phase had pretended to be on the side of the Court. He, however, was still bent on rebellion. He garrisoned and fortified his house and laid in ammunition and it was essential to take sharp measures with him. He was beguiled for a time with fair appearances, but the Queen was already planning his removal from the scene. One day Cardinal de Retz came to pay his homage and, on leaving the King's apartments, was arrested by the captain of the guard.

The Cardinal has told his story at length in his extremely interesting "Memoirs." Some of his friends knew of the fate impending but were too

late to warn him and help him to escape, as they proposed, by the kitchen entrance of the Louvre. When taken they brought in dinner and he eat heartily much to the surprise of the attendant courtiers. After a delay of three hours he entered a royal carriage with several officers and drove off under a strong escort of gendarmes and light horse, for the news of his arrest had got out and had caused an immense sensation in Paris. All passed off smoothly, for those who threatened rescue were assured that on the first hostile sign, De Retz would be killed. The prisoner arrived at Vincennes between eight and nine o'clock in the evening and was shown into a large, bare chamber without bed, carpet or fire; and in it he shivered at this bitter Christmas season, for a whole fortnight. The servant they gave him was a ruffian who stole his clothes, his shoes and his linen, and he was compelled to stay constantly in bed. He was allowed books but no paper or ink. He passed his time in the study of Greek and Latin and when permitted to leave his room he kept doves, pigeons and rabbits. He entered into a clandestine correspondence with his friends, pondering ever upon the possibilities of escape, for he had little or no hope of release otherwise.

Now fortune played into De Retz's hands. His uncle, the Archbishop of Paris, died, and the Coadjutor, although a prisoner, was entitled to succeed. Before the breath was out of the deceased's body, an agent took possession of the Archbishop's palace in the Coadjutor's name, forestalling the King's representative by just twenty minutes. De Retz was a power and had to be counted with. He was close in touch with all the parish clergy and through them could stir up the people to fresh revolt which the great ecclesiastics, chafing at the incarceration of their chief, the Archbishop, would undoubtedly support. Moreover, the Pope had written from Rome an indignant protest against the arrest of a prince of the Church. The situation was further embittered by a sad occurrence. A canon of the Notre Dame had been placed by the chapter near the Archbishop to take his orders for the administration of the diocese, and this aged priest, suffering from the confinement, lost his health and committed suicide. The death was attributed to the severity of the imprisonment and sympathy for De Retz redoubled, fanned into flame by incendiary sermons from every pulpit in Paris.

The Court now wished to temporise and overtures were made to De Retz to resign the archbishopric. He was offered in exchange the revenues of seven

wealthy abbeys, but stubbornly refused. He was advised by his friends not to yield as the only means to recover his liberty, but he finally agreed to accept the proffered exchange and pending the approval of the Holy See was transferred from Vincennes to the prison of Nantes at the mouth of the Loire. Here his treatment was softened. He was permitted to amuse himself, to receive visitors of both sexes and to see theatrical performances within the castle. He was still a close prisoner and there was a guard of the gate sentinels on his rooms; but he bore it all bravely, being buoyed up with the hope of approaching release.

A bitter disappointment was in store for him. The Pope refused to accept his resignation on the grounds that it had been extorted by force and was dated from the interior of a prison. The attitude of his gaolers changed towards him as he was suspected of foul play and he was secretly apprised that he would probably be carried further out of the world and removed to Brest. He was strongly advised to attempt escape. One idea was that he should conceal himself in a capacious mule trunk and be carried out as part of a friend's baggage. The prospect of suffocation deterred the Cardinal and he turned his thoughts to another method. This was the summer season and the river was low and a space was left at the foot of the castle wall. The prisoner was in the habit of exercising in a garden close at hand, and it was arranged that four gentlemen devoted to him should take their posts here on a certain afternoon. There was a gate at the bottom of the garden placed there to prevent the soldiers from stealing the grapes. Above was a kind of terrace on which the sentries guarding De Retz were stationed. The Cardinal managed to pass into this garden unobserved and he came upon a rope so placed as to assist him in sliding down to the lower level. Here a horse was awaiting him, which he mounted and galloped away, closely followed by his friends. Their way led through streets where they encountered a couple of guards and exchanged shots with them. All went well until De Retz's horse shied at the glitter of a ray of sunlight, stumbled and fell. The Cardinal was thrown and broke his collar bone. Both horse and man were quickly got on their feet and the fugitive, though suffering horribly, remounted and continued his flight. The party reached the river in safety, but when embarking on the ferry-boat De Retz fainted and was taken across unconscious. There was no hope of his being able to ride further and while some of them went in search of a vehicle, the others concealed the Cardinal

in a barn, where he remained for seven hours, suffering terribly. At last, help came, about two o'clock in the morning, and he was carried on a litter to another farm where he was laid upon the soft hay of a stack. He remained here until his safety was assured by the arrival of a couple of hundred gentlemen, adherents of the De Retz family, for he was now in the De Retz country. This successful escape caused much alarm in court circles, for it was feared that De Retz would reappear at once in Paris, but he was too much shaken by the accident to engage actively in public affairs. He remained in obscurity and at last withdrew from the country. He afterwards became reconciled to the royal power, serving Louis XIV loyally at Rome as ambassador to the Papal Conclave.

On the removal of the great demagogue from the scene, Mazarin returned to Paris. The people were well disposed to receive him and his re-entry was in its way a triumph. The King went many miles out to meet and welcome him, and the Italian minister, long so detested, drove into the capital amidst the most enthusiastic acclamations. The most important personages in the realm vied with each other to do him honor, many who had long labored for his destruction now protesting the most ardent attachment to him. Mazarin took his fortune at the flood and bearing no malice, if he felt any, by no means sought to avenge himself on those who had so long hated and opposed him. He resumed his place as chief minister and the remainder of his rule was mild and beneficent. Disturbances still occurred in France, but they were not of a serious nature. Conspiracies were formed but easily put down and were followed by no serious reprisals. The punishments he inflicted seldom extended to life and limb, for he had a strong abhorrence of bloodshed and he preferred the milder method of imprisonment. He waged unceasing war against depredators who infested the capital and parts of the country. Highway robbery had increased and multiplied during the long dissensions of the civil war. Mazarin was bitterly opposed to duelling as was his predecessor, Richelieu, and he wished to keep the courtiers in good humor. Indeed he directly fostered a vice to which he was himself addicted, that of the gaming table. He was a persistent gambler and it has been hinted that he thought it no discredit to take advantage of his adversary. Never, perhaps, in any age or country was there a greater addiction to play. Vast sums were won and lost in the course of an evening. On one occasion Fouquet, the notorious minister of finance of whom I shall have much more

to say, won 60,000 livres (roughly £5,000) in one deal. Gourville won as much from the Duc de Richelieu in less than ten minutes. Single stakes ran to thousands of pounds, and estates, houses, rich lace and jewels of great price were freely put up at the table.

CHAPTER VI
THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK

Louis XIV asserts himself—His use of State prisons—Procedure of reception at the Bastile—Life in the prison—Diet and privileges—Governing staff—De Besmaus—Saint Mars—Fouquet's fate foreshadowed—Fête at Vaux—King enraged—Fouquet arrested at Nantes—Lodged in the Bastile—Sentence changed from exile to perpetual imprisonment—Removed to Pignerol—Dies in prison—Man with the Iron Mask—Basis of mystery—Various suppositions—Identical with Count Mattioli—Origin of stories about him—Dies in the Bastile.

The latter years of Mazarin's government were free from serious disturbances at home and his foreign policy was distinctly beneficial to France. He governed firmly, but in the name of the King, who already evinced the strength of will and vigor of mind which were shortly to make the royal authority absolute in France. Louis XIV was still in his teens, but already he would brook no opposition from rebellious nobles or a litigious Parliament. One day he entered the Chamber, booted and spurred just as he came from hunting at Vincennes, and plainly told the members of Parliament assembled there to prepare some fresh remonstrance, that he would tolerate no more of their meetings. "I know, gentlemen, the mischief that comes from them, and I will not permit them in the future." The president protested that it was in the interests of the State. "I am the State," replied the young despot of seventeen. The country was entirely with him. All classes were sick of commotions and hailed the new authority with every demonstration of joy. Mazarin, no doubt, aided the development of Louis's character. "There is enough in Louis," he had been heard to say, "to make four good kings and one honest man," and it was under the Cardinal's counsels that Louis developed his political education.

France was now entering upon one of the most brilliant periods of her history. Mazarin had prosecuted the war with Spain so vigorously that she was prepared to come to terms. He contracted an alliance with Protestant Cromwell which resulted in substantial gains to England. Peace with Spain and the marriage of Louis to a Spanish princess were the last acts of Mazarin, whose constantly failing health showed that death was near. Now,

when the end was approaching, he had reached the pinnacle of his fortunes. No longer the hated, proscribed and persecuted minister, he enjoyed the fullest honors and the most unbounded popularity. He had grown enormously rich, for avarice was a ruling vice with him and he had uncontrolled access to the national purse. At his death he left some fifty million livres in cash, owned many palaces filled with priceless statues and pictures, and jewels of inestimable value. His conscience appears to have troubled him as death approached; he sought to silence it by making over all his possessions to the King, who speedily silenced Mazarin's scruples by returning them as a royal gift.

Not strangely, under such government, the finances of France were at their very lowest ebb. The financial incompetence of Mazarin, coupled with his greed, had left the treasury empty, and when Louis asked Fouquet for money he got for answer, "There is none in the treasury, but ask His Eminence to lend you some, he has plenty." Fortunately for France, Mazarin had introduced into the King's service one of the most eminent financiers who ever lived, Colbert, and it is reported that when dying he said, "I owe your Majesty everything; but by giving you my own intendant, Colbert, I shall repay you." Colbert became Louis's secret adviser, for Fouquet purposely complicated accounts and craftily contrived to tell the King nothing. One of Colbert's first acts was to reveal to the King that Cardinal Mazarin, over and above the great fortune he left openly to his family, had a store of wealth hidden away in various fortresses. Louis promptly laid hands upon it and was in consequence the only rich sovereign of his time in Europe.

In the long period of irresponsible despotism now at hand, the prisons were destined to play a prominent part. No one was safe from arbitrary arrest. The right of personal liberty did not exist. Every one, the highest and the lowest, the most criminal and the most venial offender, might come within the far reaching hands of the King's gaolers. Both the "Wood," as Vincennes was commonly called, and the Bastile, the "castle with the eight towers," were constantly crowded with victims of arbitrary power. It was an interminable procession as we shall presently see.

Let us first describe the procedure in arrest, the reception of prisoners and their daily régime within the great fortress gaol. It has been claimed that the

system in force was regulated with the most minute care. As imprisonment might be decreed absolutely and without question, a great responsibility was supposed to weigh upon officials. In the first instance the Bastile was under the immediate control of a minister of state, for a long time a high official. He received an accurate and exact list of all arrests made, and rendered to the King an account of all remaining at the end of each year. The order for arrest was hedged in with all precaution. Each *lettre de cachet* bore the King's own signature countersigned by a minister, and the governor of the Bastile signed a receipt for the body at the end of the order. In some cases, prisoners of distinction brought their own warrants of arrest; but the court also signed an order to receive them, without which admission would be refused. In due course, when Louis XIV had fully established his police, arrests were made by the *Lieutenant-Criminel*, whose agent approached and touched his intended prisoner with a white wand. A party of archers of the guard followed in support. A carriage was always employed; the first that came to hand being impressed into the King's service. Into this the prisoner mounted with the officer making the arrest by his side. The escort surrounded the carriage and the party marched at a foot's pace through the silent, over-awed crowd. In many cases to avoid gossip, the agent took his prisoner to a place he kept for the purpose, a private house commonly called the *four* (oven) and the remainder of the journey to the Bastile was made after dark.

The party was challenged as it approached the Bastile. The first sentinel cried, "Who goes there?" The agent replied, "The King's order;" and the under officer of the guard came out to examine the *lettre de cachet* when, if all was correct, he allowed the carriage to enter and rang the bell to inform all concerned. The soldiers of the garrison turned out under arms, the King's lieutenant and the captain of the gateway guard received the prisoner as he alighted from the carriage. If the governor was in the castle the new prisoner was conducted immediately into his presence. A short colloquy followed. It was decided in which part of the castle the new comer should be lodged. He was then taken into an adjoining apartment to be thoroughly searched and was deprived of arms, money and papers. No one but the officials and those specially authorised by the King were permitted to carry arms in the Bastile. All visitors surrendered their swords at the gate.

Now the drawbridge was let down and admission given to the inner court, whence the prisoner passed on, escorted by turnkeys, to the lodging assigned to him. If he was a person of distinction, he found a suite of rooms; if of low degree he was thrown into one of the cells in the towers. New arrivals were detained for several days in separation until the interrogatory instituted gave some idea of the fate foreshadowed. Rooms in the Bastile were not supplied with furniture. The King only guaranteed food for his guests, and they were obliged to hire what they needed unless their friends sent in the necessary articles. Later on, the King provided a special fund for the purpose of buying furniture, and five or six rooms came to be regularly furnished with a bed, a table and a couple of chairs. In rare cases servants were admitted to attend their masters, but the warders generally kept the rooms in order. If the preliminary inquiry was lengthy or the imprisonment promised to be prolonged, the prisoner was given a companion of his own class and quality whose business it was to worm his way into his confidence and eventually to betray it. These were the *moutons*, or spies of latter days. Every prison chamber was closed with a double gate with enormous locks and an approaching visitor was heralded by the rattling of the keys. The warders came regularly three times a day: first for breakfast, next for dinner at mid-day and to bring supper in the evening.

The dietary in the Bastile is said to have been wholesome and sufficient. The allowance made to the governor who acted as caterer was liberal. Some prisoners were so satisfied with it that they offered to accept simpler fare if the governor would share with them the difference saved between the outlay and the allowance. There were three courses at meals: soup, entrée and joint with a dessert and a couple of bottles of wine per head, while the governor sent in more wine on fête days. Reduction of diet was a common punishment, but the offenders were seldom put upon bread and water treatment, which was thought so rigorous that it was never used except by the express orders of the Court. The King paid for ordinary rations only. Luxuries such as tobacco, high-class wine and superior viands prisoners found for themselves, and these were charged against their private funds, held by the authorities. Some smoked a good deal, but many complaints against the practice were made by other prisoners. The keeping of pets was not forbidden; there were numbers of dogs, cats and birds in cages and even

pigeons which were set free in the morning and returned every evening after spending the day in town. But these last were looked upon with suspicion as facilitating correspondence with the outside. The surgeon of the castle attended to the sick, but in bad cases one of the King's physicians was called in and nurses appointed. When death approached a confessor was summoned to administer the rites of the Church, and upon death a proper entry was made in the mortuary register, but often under a false name.

Time passed heavily, no doubt, but the prisoners were not denied certain relaxations. They might purchase books subject to approval. When brought in they were scrupulously examined and the binding broken up in the search for concealed documents. Where prisoners did not care to read they were permitted to play draughts, chess and even cards. Writing materials were issued, but with a very niggardly hand. A larger consideration was extended to those given the so-called "liberty of the Bastile." The doors were opened early and they were permitted to enter the courtyard and remain there until nightfall, being allowed to talk, to play certain games and to receive visits from their friends. Such relaxations were chiefly limited to non-criminal prisoners, those detained for family reasons, officers under arrest, and prisoners, whose cases were disposed of but who were still detained for safe custody. The well-being of the inmates of the Bastile was supposed to be ensured by the constant visits of the superior officials, the King's lieutenant, the governor and his major. Permission to address petitions to the ministers was not denied and many heart-rending appeals are still to be read in the archives, emanating from people whose liberty had been forfeited. Clandestine communications between prisoners kept strictly apart were frequently successful, as we have seen; old hands exhibited extraordinary cleverness in their desire to talk to their neighbors. They climbed the chimneys, crawled along the outer bars or raised their voices so as to be heard on the floor above or below.

Much ingenuity was shown in utilising strange articles as writing materials; the drumstick of a fowl was turned into a pen, a scrap of linen or a piece of plaster torn from the wall served as writing paper and fresh blood was used for ink. Constant attempts were made to communicate with the outside. The old trick of throwing out of the window a stone wrapped in paper covered with writing was frequently tried. If it reached the street and was picked up

it generally passed on to its address. Patroles were employed, day and night, making the rounds of the exterior to check this practice. The bird fanciers tied letters to the legs of the pigeons which took wing, and the detection of this device led to a general gaol delivery from all bird cages. Friends outside were at great pains to pass in news of the day to prisoners. Where the prison windows gave upon the street, and when prisoners were permitted to exercise on the platforms of the towers, their friends waited on the boulevards below and used conventional signs by waving a handkerchief or placing a hand in a particular position to convey some valued piece of intelligence. It is said that when Laporte, the *valet de chambre* of Anne of Austria, was arrested, the Queen herself lingered in the street so that her faithful servant might see her and know that he was not forgotten. Sometimes the house opposite the castle was rented with a notice board and a message inscribed with gigantic
letters was hung in the windows to be read by those
inside.

The governing staff of the Bastile, although ample and generally efficient, could not entirely check these disorders. The supreme chief was the Captain-Governor. Associated with him was a lieutenant of the King, immediately under his orders were a major and aide-major with functions akin to those of an adjutant and his assistant. There was a chief engineer and a director of fortifications, a doctor and a surgeon, a wet-nurse, a chaplain, a confessor and his coadjutor. The Châtelet delegated a commissary to the department of the Bastile, whose business it was to make judicial inquiries. An architect, two keepers of the archives and three or four turnkeys, practically the body servants and personal attendants of the prisoners, completed the administrative staff. A military company of sixty men under the direct command of the governor and his major formed the garrison and answered for the security of the castle. Reliance must have been placed chiefly upon the massive walls of the structure, for this company was composed mainly of old soldiers, infirm invalids, not particularly active or useful in such emergencies as open insubordination or attempted escape. The emoluments of the governor were long fixed at 1,200 livres, but the irregular profits far out-valued the fixed salary. The governor was, to all intents and purposes, a hotel or boarding house keeper, who was paid head money for his involuntary guests. The sum of ten livres per diem

was allowed for each, a sum far in excess of the charge for diet. This allowance was increased when the lodgers exceeded a certain number. The governor had other perquisites, such as the rent of the sheds erected in the Bastile ditch. He was permitted to fill his cellars with wine untaxed, which he generally exchanged with a dealer for inferior fluid to re-issue to the prisoners. In later years when the influx of prisoners diminished, the governors appear to have complained bitterly of the diminution of their income. Petitions imploring relief may be read in the actions from governors impoverished by their outgoings in paying for the garrison and turnkey. They could not "make both ends meet."

The governor, or captain of the castle, was in supreme charge. The ministers of state transmitted to him the orders of the King direct. He corresponded with them and in exceptional cases with the King himself; but was answerable for the castle and the safe custody of the inmates. His power was absolute and he wielded it with military exactitude. We have seen in the list of earlier custodians, that the most distinguished persons did not feel the position was beneath them; but as time passed, it was thought safer to employ smaller people, the creatures of the court whose loyalty and subservience might be most certainly depended upon. After du Tremblay, who surrendered his fortress to the Fronde, came Broussel the elder, the member of Parliament who had defied Anne of Austria, with his son as his lieutenant. Then came La Louvière, who was commandant of the place when the "Grande Mademoiselle" seized it in aid of the great Condé. He was removed by the King's order and when peace was declared one de Vennes succeeded him and then La Bachelerie. But De Besmaus, who had been a simple captain in Mazarin's guard, was the first of what we may call the "gaoler governors." He was appointed by the King in 1658 and held the post for nearly forty years. Through all the busy period when Louis XIV personally controlled the morals of his kingdom and used the castle to enforce his despotic will a great variety of prisoners came under his charge; political conspirators, religious dissidents, Jansenists and Protestants, free thinkers and reckless writers with unbridled libellous pens, publishers who dared to print unauthorised books which were tried in court and sentenced to committal to gaol for formal destruction, common criminals, thieves, cutpurses and highway robbers. De Besmaus has been described as a "coarse, brutal governor, a dry, disagreeable, hard-hearted ruffian;" but

another report applauds the selection, declaring that his unshaken fidelity through thirty-nine years of office was associated with much gentleness and humanity. His honesty is more questioned, for it is stated that although he entered the service poor, he bequeathed considerable sums at his death. Monsieur de Saint Mars, who fills so large a place in the criminal annals of the times, from his connection with certain famous and mysterious prisoners, succeeded De Besmaus. He was an old man and had risen from the ranks, having been first a King's musketeer, then corporal, then Maréchal de Logis, and was then appointed commandant of the donjon of Pignerol.

When Cardinal Mazarin died, the probable successor to the vacant office was freely discussed and choice was supposed to lie between Le Tellier, secretary of State for war, Lionne, secretary for foreign affairs, and Fouquet, superintendent of finances. Louis XIV soon settled the question by announcing his intention of assuming the reins of government himself. When leading personages came to him, asking to whom they should speak in future upon affairs of State, Louis replied, "To me. I shall be my own Prime Minister in future." He said it with a decision that could not be questioned, and it was plain that the young monarch of twenty-two proposed to sacrifice his ease, to subordinate his love of pleasure and amusement to the duties of his high position—resolutions fulfilled in the main. In truth he had been chafing greatly at the vicarious authority exercised by Mazarin and was heard to say that he could not think what would have happened had the Cardinal lived much longer. People could not believe in Louis's determination and predicted that he would soon weary of his burdensome task. Fouquet was the most incredulous of all. He thought himself firmly fixed in his place and believed that by humoring the King, by encouraging him in his extravagance and providing funds for his gratification, he would still retain his power. He sought, too, by complicating the business and confusing the accounts of his office, to disgust the King with financial details and blind him to the dishonest statements put before him. Fouquet thus prepared his own undoing, for Louis, suspecting foul play, was secretly coached by Colbert, who came privately by night to the King's cabinet to instruct and pilot him through the dark and intricate pitfalls that Fouquet prepared for him. Louis patiently bided his time and suffered Fouquet to go farther and farther astray, to

increase his peculations and lavish enormous sums of the ill-gotten wealth in ostentatious extravagance. Louis made up his mind to pull down and destroy his faithless minister. His insidious plans, laid with a patient subtlety, not to say perfidy, were the first revelation of the masterly and unscrupulous character of the young sovereign. He led Fouquet on to convict himself and show to all the world, by a costly entertainment on unparalleled lines, how deeply he had dipped his purse into the revenues of the State.

The fête he gave to the King and court at his newly constructed palace at Vaux was brilliant beyond measure. The mansion far outshone any royal residence in beauty and splendor. Three entire villages had been demolished in its construction so that water might be brought to the grounds to fill the reservoirs and serve the fountains and cascades that freshened the lawns and shady alleys and gladdened the eye with smiling landscapes. The fête he now gave was of oriental magnificence. Enchantment followed enchantment. Tables laden with luscious viands came down from the ceiling. Mysterious subterranean music was heard on every side. The most striking feature was an ambulant mountain of confectionery which moved amongst the guests with hidden springs. Molière was there and at the King's suggestion wrote a play on the spot, "*Les Facheux*," which caricatured some of the most amusing guests. The King was a prey to jealous amazement. He saw pictures by the most celebrated painters, grounds laid out by the most talented landscape gardeners, buildings of the most noble dimensions erected by the most famous architects. After the theatre there were fireworks, after the pyrotechnics a ball at which the King danced with Mademoiselle de la Vallière; after the ball, supper; and after supper, the King bade Fouquet good night with the words, "I shall never dare ask you to my house; I could not receive you properly."

More than once that night the King, sore at heart and humiliated at the gorgeous show made by a subject and servant of the State, would have arrested Fouquet then and there. The Queen Mother strongly dissuaded him from too hasty action and he saw that it would be necessary to proceed with caution lest he find serious, and possibly successful, resistance. Fouquet did not waste all his wealth in ostentation. He had purchased the island of Belle Ile from the Duc de Retz and fortified it with the idea, it was thought, to withdraw there if he failed to secure the first place in the kingdom, raise the

standard of revolt against the King and seek aid from England. It was time to pull down so powerful a subject.

The measures taken for the arrest of Fouquet may be recounted here at some length. They well illustrate the young King's powers of dissimulation and the extreme caution that backed his resolute will. He first assumed a friendly attitude and led Fouquet to believe that he meant to bestow on him the valued decoration of Saint d'Esprit. But he had already given it to another member of the Paris Parliament and a rule had been made that only one of that body should enjoy the honor. Fouquet was Procureur General of the Parliament and voluntarily sold the place so that he might become eligible for the cross, at the same time paying the price into the Treasury. Louis was by no means softened and still determined to abase Fouquet. Yet he shrank from making the arrest in Paris and invented a pretext for visiting the west coast of France for the purpose of choosing a site for a great naval depot. He was to be accompanied by his council, Fouquet among the rest. Although the Superintendent was suffering from fever, he proceeded to Nantes by the river Loire, where the King, travelling by the road, soon afterwards arrived. Some delay occurred through the illness of d'Artagnan, lieutenant of musketeers, who was to be charged with the arrest. The reader will recognise d'Artagnan, the famous fourth of the still more famous "Three Musketeers" of Alexandre Dumas. The instructions issued to d'Artagnan are preserved in the memorandum written by Le Tellier's clerk and may be summarised as follows:—

"It is the King's intention to arrest the Sieur Fouquet on his leaving the castle (Nantes) when he has passed beyond the last sentinel. Forty musketeers will be employed, twenty to remain within the court of the castle, the other twenty to patrol outside. The arrest will be made when Sieur Fouquet comes down from the King's chamber, and he will be carried, surrounded by the musketeers, to the Chamberlain's room, there to await the King's carriage which is to take him further on. Monsieur d'Artagnan will offer Monsieur Fouquet a basin of soup if he should care to take it. Meanwhile the musketeers will form a cordon round the lodging in which the Chamberlain's room is situated. Monsieur d'Artagnan will not take his eyes off the prisoner for a single moment nor will he permit him to put his hand into his pocket so as to remove any papers, telling him that the King demands the delivery of all documents; and those he gets Monsieur

d'Artagnan will at once pass on to the authority indicated. In entering the royal carriage Monsieur Fouquet will be accompanied by Monsieur d'Artagnan with five of his most trustworthy officers and musketeers. The road taken will be: the first day, to Oudon, the second day, to Ingrandes, and the third, to the castle of Angers. Extreme care will be observed that Monsieur Fouquet has no communication by word or writing or in any other possible way with any one on the road. At Oudon, Monsieur Fouquet will be summoned to deliver an order in his own hand to the Commandant of Belle Ile to hand it over to an officer of the King. In order that every precaution may be taken at Angers, its governor, the Count d'Harcourt, will receive orders to surrender the place to Monsieur d'Artagnan and expel the garrison. This letter will be forwarded express to Angers so that all may be ready on the arrival. At the same time a public notice shall be issued to the inhabitants of Angers requiring them to give every assistance in food and lodging to the King's musketeers. Monsieur Fouquet will be lodged in the most suitable rooms which will be furnished with goods purchased in the town. The King will himself nominate the *valet de chambre* and decide upon the prisoner's rations and the supply of his table. Monsieur d'Artagnan will receive 1,000 louis for all expenses."

The arrest was not limited to the Superintendent himself. His chief clerk Pellisson, who afterwards became famous in literature, was also taken to Saint Mandé. Fouquet's house and his papers were seized; which his brother would have forestalled by burning the house but was too late. A mass of damaging papers fell into the hands of the King. One of these was an elaborate manuscript with the project of a general rising, treasonable in the highest degree. The scheme was too wild and visionary for accomplishment and Fouquet himself swore positively that it was a forgery. Fouquet did not remain long at Angers. He was carried to Amboise and afterwards to Vincennes, always under the strictest surveillance, being suffered to speak to no one en route but his guards and denied the use of writing materials. He left Amboise in December, 1661, for Vincennes, under the escort of eighty musketeers, and from time to time passed to and fro between the "Wood" and the Bastile as his interminable trial dragged along. He was first interrogated at Vincennes by an informal tribunal, the commission previously constituted to inquire into the malversation of finances, but he steadily refused to answer except in free and open court.

After much persecution by his enemies with the King himself at their head, and the violation of all forms of law, he was taken again to the Bastile and arraigned before the so-called Chamber of Justice at the Arsenal, a tribunal made up mainly of unjust and prejudiced judges, some of whom hated the prisoner bitterly. The process was delayed by Fouquet's dexterity in raising objections and involving others in the indictment. Louis XIV ardently desired the end. "My reputation is at stake," he wrote. "The matter is not serious, really, but in foreign countries it will be thought so if I cannot secure the conviction of a thief." The King's long standing animosity was undying, as the sequel showed. Throughout, the public sympathy was with Fouquet. He had troops of friends; he had been a liberal patron of art and letters and all the best brains of Paris were on his side. Madame de Sévigné filled several of her matchless letters with news of the case. La Fontaine bemoaned his patron's fate in elegant verse. Mademoiselle Scuderi, the first French novelist, wrote of him eloquently. Henault attacked Colbert in terms that might well have landed him in the Bastile, and Pellisson, his former clerk, from the depths of that prison made public his eloquent and impassioned justifications of his old master. At last, when hope was almost dead, the relief was great at hearing that there would be no sentence of death as was greatly feared. By thirteen votes against nine, a sentence of banishment was decreed and the result was made public amid general rejoicing. The sentence was deemed light, although Fouquet had already endured three years' imprisonment and he must have suffered much in the protracted trial. Louis XIV, still bearing malice, would not allow Fouquet to escape so easily and changed banishment abroad into perpetual imprisonment at home. The case is quoted as one of the rare instances in which a despotic sovereign ruler over-rode the judgment of a court by ordering a more severe sentence and personally ensuring its harsh infliction.

He was forthwith transferred to Pignerol, escorted again by d'Artagnan and a hundred musketeers. Special instructions for his treatment, contained in letters from the King in person, were handed over to Saint Mars. By express royal order he was forbidden to communicate in speech or writing with anyone but his gaolers. He might not leave the room he occupied for a single moment or for any reason. He could not use a slate to note down his thoughts, that common boon extended to all modern prisoners. These restrictions were imposed with the most watchful precautions and, as we

may well believe, were inspired with the wish to cut him off absolutely from friends outside. He was supposed to have some valuable information to communicate and the King was determined it should not pass through. Fouquet's efforts and devices were most persistent and ingenious. He utilised all manner of material; writing on the ribbons that ornamented his clothes and the linen that lined them. When the ribbons were tabooed and removed and the linings were all in black he abstracted pieces of his table cloth and manufactured it into paper. He made pens out of fowl bones and ink from soot. He wrote on the inside of his books and on his pocket handkerchiefs. Once he begged to be allowed a telescope and it was discovered that some of his former attendants had arrived in Pignerol and were in communication with him by signal. They were forthwith commanded to leave the neighborhood. He was very attentive to his religious duties at one time, and constantly asked for the ministrations of a priest. From this some clandestine work was suspected and the visits of the confessor were strictly limited to four a year. A servant was, however, permitted to wait on him but was presently replaced by two others, who were intended to act as spies on each other; although on joining Fouquet these were plainly warned that they would never be allowed to leave Pignerol alive.

After eight years the severity of his incarceration appreciably relaxed. The incriminated financiers outside were by this time disposed of or dead. He was given leave to write a letter to his wife and receive one in reply, on condition that they were previously read by the authorities. His personal comfort was improved and he was allowed tea, at that time a most expensive luxury. He had many more books to read, the daily gazettes and current news reached him, and when presently the Comte de Lauzun was brought a prisoner to Pignerol, the two were permitted to take exercise together upon the ramparts. By degrees greater favor was shown. Fouquet was permitted to play outdoor games and the privilege of unlimited correspondence was conceded, both with relations and friends. Fouquet's wife and children were suffered to reside in the town of Pignerol and were constant visitors, permitted to remain with him alone, without witnesses. As the prisoner, who was failing in health, grew worse and worse, his wife was permitted to occupy the same room with him and his daughter lodged alongside. When he died in 1680, all his near relations were present. The

fact has been questioned; and a tradition exists that Fouquet, still no older than sixty-six, was released and lived on in extreme privacy for twenty-three years. The point is of interest as illustrating the veil of secrecy so often thrown over events in that age and so often impenetrable.

This seems a fitting opportunity to refer to a prison mystery belonging to this period, and originating in Pignerol, which has exercised the whole world for many generations. The fascinating story of the "Man with the Iron Mask," as presented by writers enamored of romantic sensation, has attracted universal attention for nearly two centuries. A fruitful field for investigation and conjecture was opened up by the strange circumstances of the case. Voltaire with his keen love of dramatic effect was the first to awaken the widespread interest in an historic enigma for which there was no plausible solution. Who was this unknown person held captive for five and twenty unbroken years with his identity so studiously and strictly hidden that it has never yet been authoritatively revealed? The mystery deepened with the details (mostly imaginery) of the exceptional treatment accorded him. Year after year he wore a mask, really made of black velvet on a whalebone frame, not a steel machine, with a chin-piece closing with a spring and looking much like an instrument of mediæval torture. He was said to have been treated with extreme deference. His gaoler stood, bareheaded, in his presence. He led a luxurious life; he wore purple and fine linen and costly lace; his diet was rich and plentiful and served on silver plate; he was granted the solace of music; every wish was gratified, save in the one cardinal point of freedom. The plausible theory deduced from all this was that he was a personage of great consequence,—of high, possibly royal birth, who was imprisoned and segregated for important reasons of State.

Such conditions, quite unsubstantiated by later knowledge, fired the imagination of inquirers, and a clue to the mystery has been sought in some exalted victim whom Louis XIV had the strongest reason to keep out of sight. Many suggested explanations were offered, all more or less far fetched even to absurdity. The first was put forward by at least two respectable writers, who affirmed that a twin son was born to Anne of Austria, some hours later than the birth of the Dauphin, and that Louis XIII, fearing there might be a disputed succession, was resolved to conceal the fact. It was held by certain legal authorities in France that the first born of

twins had no positive and exclusive claim to the inheritance. Accordingly, the second child was conveyed away secretly and confided first to a nurse and then to the governor of Burgundy who kept him close. But the lad, growing to manhood, found out who he was and was forthwith placed in confinement, with a mask to conceal his features which were exactly like those of his brother, the King. Yet this view was held by many people of credit in France and it was that to which the great Napoleon inclined, for he was keenly interested in the question and when in power had diligent search made in the National archives, quite without result, which greatly chafed his imperious mind. A similar theory of the birth of this second child was found very attractive; the paternity of it was given, not to Louis XIII, but to various lovers: the Duke of Buckingham, Cardinal Mazarin and a gentleman of the court whose name never transpired. This is the wildest and most extravagant of surmises, for which there is not one vestige of authority. The first suggestion is altogether upset by the formalities and precautions observed at the birth of "a child of France," and it would have been absolutely impossible to perpetrate the fraud.

Other special and fanciful suppositions have gained credence, but their mere statement is sufficient to upset them. One is the belief that the "Man with the Iron Mask" was the English Duke of Monmouth, the son of Charles II and Lucy Waters, who raised the standard of revolt against James II and suffered death on Tower Hill. It was pretended that a devoted follower, whose life was also forfeit, took his place upon the scaffold and was hacked about in Monmouth's place by the clumsy executioner. The craze for ridiculous conjecture led to the adoption of Henry Cromwell, the Protector's second son, as the cryptic personage, but there was never a shadow of evidence to support this story and no earthly reason why Louis XIV should desire to imprison and conceal a young Englishman. Nor can we understand why Louis should thus dispose of his own son by Louise de Vallière, the young Comte de Vermandois, whose death in camp at an early age was fully authenticated by the sums allotted to buy masses for the repose of his soul. The disappearance of the Duc de Beaufort's body after his death on the field of Candia led to his promotion to the honor of the Black Mask, but his head was probably sent to the Sultan of Turkey, and in any case, although he was, as we have already seen, a noisy, vulgar demagogue, he had made his peace with the court in his later days. There

was no mystery about Fouquet's imprisonment. The story which has just been told to the time of his death shows conclusively that he could not be the "Man with the Iron Mask," nor was there any sound reason to think it. The same may be said of the rather crazy suggestion that he was Avedik, the Armenian patriarch at Constantinople who, having incurred the deadly animosity of the Jesuits, had been kidnapped and brought to France. This conclusion was entirely vitiated by the unalterable logic of dates. The patriarch was carried off from Constantinople just a year after the mysterious person died in the Bastile.

Thus, one by one, we exclude and dispose of the uncertain and improbable claimants to the honors of identification. But one person remains whom the cap fits from the first; a man who, we know, offended Louis mortally and whose imprisonment the King had the best of reasons, from his own point of view, for desiring: the first, private vengeance, the second, the public good and the implacable will to carry out his set purpose. It is curious that this solution which was close at hand seems never to have appealed to the busy-bodies who approached the subject with such exaggerated ideas about the impenetrable mystery. A prisoner had been brought to Pignerol at a date which harmonizes with the first appearance of the unknown upon the stage. Great precautions were observed to keep his personality a secret; but it was distinctly known to more than one, and although guarded with official reticence, there were those who could have, and must have drawn their own conclusions. In any case the screen has now been entirely torn aside and documentary evidence is afforded which proves beyond all doubt that no real mystery attaches to the "Man with the Iron Mask."

The exact truth of the story will be best established by a brief history of the antecedent facts. When Louis XIV was at the zenith of his power, supreme at home and an accepted arbiter abroad, he was bent upon consolidating his power in Northern Italy, and eagerly opened negotiations with the Duke of Mantua to acquire the fortress town of Casale. The town was a decisive point which secured his predominance in Montferrat, which gave an easy access at any time into Lombardy. The terms agreed upon were, first, a payment of 100,000 crowns by Louis to the Duke of Mantua and, second, a promise that the latter should command any French army sent into Italy; in exchange, the surrender of Casale. The transaction had been started by the French ambassador in Venice and the principal agent was a certain Count

Mattioli, who had been a minister to the Duke of Mantua and was high in his favor. Mattioli visited Paris and was well received by the King, who sent him back to Italy to complete the contract. Now, however, unexplained delays arose and it came out that the great Powers, who were strongly opposed to the dominating influence of France in Northern Italy, had been informed of what was pending. The private treaty with France became public property and there could be no doubt but that Mattioli had been bought over. He had in fact sold out the French king and the whole affair fell through.

Louis XIV, finding himself deceived and betrayed, was furiously angry and resolved to avenge himself upon the traitor. It was pain and anguish to him to find that he had been cheated before all Europe, and in his discomfiture and bitter humiliation he prepared to avenge himself amply. On the suggestion of the French minister at Turin he planned that Mattioli should be kidnapped and carried into France and there subjected to the King's good pleasure. Mattioli was a needy man and was easily beguiled by the Frenchman's promises of a substantial sum in French gold, from the French general, Catinat, who was on the frontier with ample funds for use when Casale should have been occupied. Mattioli, unsuspecting, met Catinat not far from Pignerol, where after revealing the place where his papers were concealed he fell into the hands of the French. Louis had approved of the arrest and insisted only on secrecy, and that Mattioli should be carried off without the least suspicion in Casale. "Look to it," he wrote, "that no one knows what becomes of this man." And at the same time the governor of Pignerol, Saint Mars, was instructed by Louvois, the minister, to receive him in great secrecy and was told, "You will guard him in such a manner that, not only may he have no communication with anyone, but that he may have cause to repent his conduct, and that no one may know you have a new prisoner." The secrecy was necessary because Mattioli was the diplomatic agent of another country and his arrest was a barefaced violation of the law of nations.

Brigadier-General (afterwards the famous Marshal) Catinat reports from Pignerol on May 3rd, 1679:—"I arrested Mattioli yesterday, three miles from here, upon the King's territories, during the interview which the Abbe d'Estrades had ingeniously contrived between himself, Mattioli and me, to facilitate the scheme. For the arrest, I employed only the Chevaliers de

Saint Martin and de Villebois, two officers under M. de Saint Mars, and four men of his company. It was effected without the least violence, and no one knows the rogue's name, not even the officers who assisted." This fixed beyond all doubt the identity, but there is a corroborative evidence in a pamphlet still in existence, dated 1682, which states that "the Secretary was surrounded by ten or twelve horsemen who seized him, disguised him, masked him and conducted him to Pignerol." This is farther borne out by a traditionary arrest about that time.

When, thirty years later, the great sensation was first invented, its importance was emphasised by Voltaire and others who declared that at the period of the arrest no disappearance of any important person was recorded. Certainly Mattioli's disappearance was not much noticed. It was given out that he was dead, the last news of him being a letter to his father in Padua begging him to hand over his papers to a French agent. They were concealed in a hole in the wall in one of the rooms in his father's house, and when obtained without demur were forwarded to the King in Paris. There was no longer any doubt of Mattioli's guilt, and Louis exacted the fullest penalty. He would annihilate him, sweep him out of existence, condemn him to a living death as effective as though he were poisoned, strangled or otherwise removed. He did not mean that the man who had flouted and deceived him should be in a position to glory over the affront he had put upon the proudest king in Christendom.

Exit Mattioli. Enter the "Man with the Iron Mask." Pignerol, the prison to which he was consigned, has already been described, and also Saint Mars, his gaoler. The mask was not regularly used at first, but the name of Mattioli was changed on reception to Lestang. We come at once upon evidence that this was no distinguished and favored prisoner. The deference shown him, the silver plate, the fine clothes are fictions destroyed by a letter written by Louvois within a fortnight of the arrest. "It is not the King's intention," he writes, "that the Sieur de Lestang should be well treated, or that, except the necessaries of life, you should give him anything to soften his captivity.... You must keep Lestang in the rigorous confinement I enjoined in my previous letters."

Saint Mars punctiliously obeyed his orders. He was a man of inflexible character, with no bowels of compassion for his charges, and Lestang must

have felt the severity of the prison rule. Eight months later the governor reported that Lestang, likewise a fellow prisoner, a monk, who shared his chamber, had gone out of his mind. Both were subject to fits of raving madness. This is the only authentic record of the course of the imprisonment, which lasted fifteen years in this same prison of Pignerol. Saint Mars, in 1681, exchanged his governorship for that of Exiles, another frontier fortress, and was supposed to have carried his masked prisoner with him. This erroneous belief has been disproved by a letter of Saint Mars to the Abbe d'Estrades, discovered in the archives, in which the writer states that he has left Mattioli at Pignerol. There is no attempt at disguise. The name used is Mattioli, not Lestang, and it is clear from collateral evidence that this is the masked man.

Saint Mars was not pleased with Exiles and solicited another transfer which came in his appointment to the command of the castle on the island of Sainte-Marguerite, opposite Cannes and well known to visitors to the French Riviera. The fortress, by the way, has much later interest as Marshal Bazaine's place of confinement after his trial by court martial for surrendering Metz. It will be remembered, too, that with the connivance of friends Bazaine made his escape from durance, although it may be doubted whether the French Republic was particularly anxious to keep him.

The time at length arrived for Mattioli's removal from Pignerol. A change had come over the fortunes of France. Louis was no longer the dictator of Europe. Defeated in the field and thwarted in policy, the proud King had to eat humble pie; he was forced to give up Casale, which had come to him after all in spite of Mattioli's betrayal. Pignerol also went back once more to Italian rule and it must be cleared of French prisoners. One alone remained of any importance, for Fouquet was long since dead and Lauzun released. This was Mattioli, whose illegal seizure and detention it was now more than ever necessary to keep secret. Extreme precautions were taken when making the transfer. A strong detachment of soldiers, headed by guides, escorted the prisoner who was in a litter. The governor of Pignerol (now one Villebois) by his side was the only person permitted to communicate with him. The locks and bolts of his quarters at Pignerol were sent ahead to be used at Sainte-Marguerite and the strictest discipline was maintained on the journey. Mattioli saw no one. His solitude was unbroken save by Saint Mars and the two lieutenants who brought him his food and removed the dishes.

One other change awaited the prisoner, the last before his final release. High preferment came to Saint Mars, who was offered and accepted the governorship of the Bastile. He was to bring his “ancient prisoner” with him to Paris; to make the long journey across France weighted with the terrible responsibility of conveying such a man safely in open arrest. We get a passing glimpse of the cortège in a letter published by the grandnephew of Saint Mars, M. Polteau, who describes the halt made for a night at Polteau, a country house belonging to Saint Mars.

“The Man in the Mask,” he writes, in 1768, “came in a litter which preceded that of M. de Saint Mars. They were accompanied by several men on horseback. The peasants waited to greet their lord. M. de Saint Mars took his meals with his prisoner, who was placed with his back to the windows of the dining room which overlooked the courtyard. The peasants whom I questioned could not see whether he wore his mask while eating, but they took notice of the fact that M. de Saint Mars who sat opposite to him kept a pair of pistols beside his plate. They were waited on by one manservant who fetched the dishes from the anteroom where they were brought to him, taking care to close the door of the dining room after him. When the prisoner crossed the courtyard, he always wore the black mask. The peasants noticed that his teeth and lips showed through, also that he was tall and had white hair. M. de Saint Mars slept in a bed close to that of the masked man.”

The prisoner arrived at the Bastile on the 18th of September, 1698, and the authentic record of his reception appears in the journal of the King’s lieutenant of the castle, M. du Junca, still preserved in the Arsenal Library. “M. de Saint Mars, governor of the Chateau of the Bastile, presented, for the first time, coming from his government of the Isle of Sainte-Marguerite, bringing with him a prisoner who was formerly in his keeping at Pignerol.” The entry goes on to say that the newcomer was taken to the third chamber of the Bertandière tower and lodged there alone in the charge of a gaoler who had come with him. He was nameless in the Bastile and was known only as “the prisoner from Provence” or “the ancient prisoner.”

His isolation and seclusion were strictly maintained for the first three years of his imprisonment in the Bastile and then came a curious change. He is no longer kept apart. He is associated with other prisoners, and not of the best

class. One, a rascally domestic servant, who practised black magic, and a disreputable rake who had once been an army officer. Nothing is said about the mask, but there can no longer be much secrecy and the mystery might be divulged at any time. It is evident that the reasons for concealment have passed away. The old political intrigue has lost its importance. No one cared to know about Casale. Louis XIV had slaked his vindictiveness and the sun of his splendor was on the decline. Nevertheless it was not till after his death that the prisoner's real name transpired. He died as he had lived, unknown. Du Junca enters the event in the register:—

"The prisoner unknown, masked always ... happening to be unwell yesterday on coming from mass died this day about 10 o'clock in the evening without having had any serious illness; indeed it could not have been slighter ... and this unknown prisoner confined so long a time was buried on Tuesday at four in the afternoon in the cemetery of St. Paul, our parish. On the register of burial he was given a name also unknown." To this is added in the margin, "I have since learnt that he was named on the register M. de Marchiali." A further entry can be seen in the parish register. "On the 19th of November, 1703, Marchioly, of the age of forty-five or thereabouts, died in the Bastile ... and was buried in the presence of the major and the surgeon of the Bastile." "Marchioly" is curiously like "Mattioli" and it is a fair assumption that the true identity of the "Man with the Iron Mask" bursts forth on passing the verge of the silent land.

Lauzun, a third inmate of Pignerol about this period, calls for mention here as a prominent courtier whose misguided ambition and boundless impudence tempted him seriously to affront and offend the King. The penalties that overtook him were just what a bold, intemperate subject might expect from an autocratic, unforgiving master. This prisoner, the Count de Lauzun, was rightly styled by a contemporary "the most insolent little man that had been seen for a century." He had no considerable claims to great talents, agreeable manners or personal beauty, but he was quick to establish himself in the good graces of Louis XIV. He was one of the first to offer him the grateful incense of unlimited adulation. He worshipped the sovereign as a superior being, erected him into a god, lavished the most fulsome flattery on him, declaring that Louis by his wisdom, wit, greatness and majesty took rank as a divinity. Yet he sometimes forgot himself and went to the other extreme, daring to attack and upbraid the King if he

disapproved of his conduct. Once he sided with Madame de Montespan when she was first favorite and remonstrated with Louis so rudely that the King cast him at once into the Bastile. But such blunt honesty won the King's respect and speedy forgiveness. Lauzun was soon released and advanced from post to post, each of successively greater value, so that the hypocritical courtier, who had made the most abject submission, seemed assured of high fortune. As he rose, his ambition grew and he aspired now to the hand of the King's cousin, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who began to look upon him with favor. This was the same "Grande Mademoiselle," the heroine of the wars of the Fronde, who was now a wealthy heiress and who at one time came near being the King's wife and Queen. The match was so unequal as to appear wildly impossible, but De Lauzun was strongly backed by Madame de Montespan and two nobles of high rank were induced to make a formal proposal to the King.

Louis liked De Lauzun and gave his consent without hesitation. The marriage might have been completed at once but the bold suitor, successful beyond his deserts and puffed up with conceit, put off the happy day so as to give more and more éclat to the wedding ceremony. While he procrastinated his enemies were unceasingly active. The princes of the blood and jealous fellow courtiers constantly implored the King to avoid so great a mistake, and Louis, having been weak enough to give his consent, was now so base as to withdraw it. De Lauzun retorted by persuading Mademoiselle de Montpensier to marry him privately. This reckless act, after all, might have been forgiven, but he was full of bitterness against those who had injured him with the King and desired to retaliate. He more especially hated Madame de Montespan, whom he now plotted to ruin by very unworthy means. He thus filled his cup and procured the full measure of the King's indignation. He was arrested and consigned to Pignerol, where in company with Fouquet he languished for ten years.

CHAPTER VII
THE POWER OF THE BASTILE

Louis XIV and the *lettre de cachet*—Society corrupt—Assassination common—Cheating at cards—Shocking state of Paris—"The Court of Miracles"—Prisons filled—Prisoners detained indefinitely—Revived persecution of the Protestants—General exodus of industrious artisans—Inside the Bastile—Sufferings of the prisoners—The Comte Pagan—Imprisonment for blasphemy, riotous conduct in the streets and all loose living—Kidnapping of the Armenian Patriarch, Avedik—His sudden death—Many heinous crimes disgrace the epoch—Plot of the Chevalier de Rohan—Its detection—De Rohan executed.

The three notable cases of arrest and imprisonment given in the last chapter are typical of the régime at last established in France under the personal rule of a young monarch whom various causes had combined to render absolute. The willing submission of a people sick of civil war, the removal or complete subjection of the turbulent vassals, his own imperious character,—that of a strong willed man with a set resolve to be sovereign, irresponsible master,—all combined to consolidate his powers. Louis was the incarnation of selfishness. To have his own way with everyone and in everything, to gratify every whim and passion was the keynote of his sensuous and indulgent nature. No one dared oppose him; no one stood near him. His subjects were his creatures; the greatest nobles accepted the most menial tasks about his person. His abject and supple-backed courtiers offered him incense and dosed him with the most fulsome flattery. He held France in the hollow of his hand and French society was formed on his model, utterly corrupt and profligate under a thin veneer of fine manners which influenced all Europe and set its fashions.

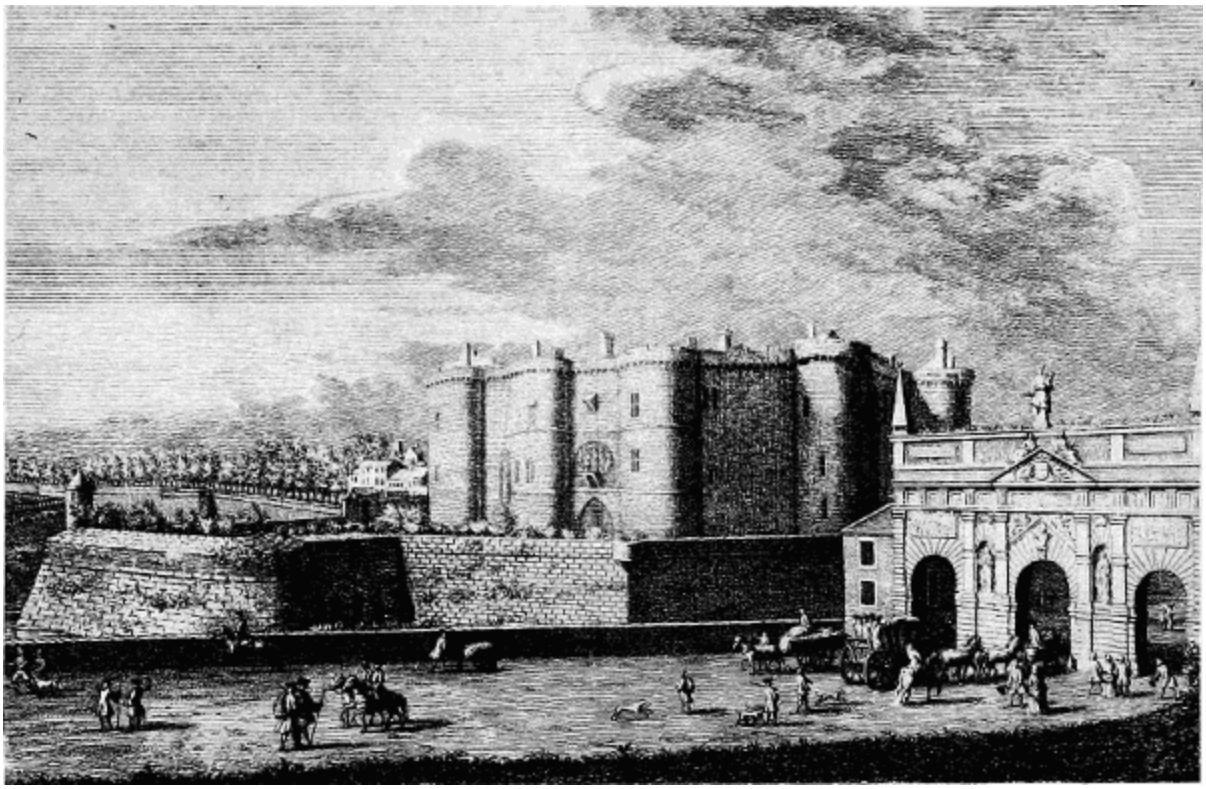
The worst example set by Louis was in his interference with personal liberty. The privilege of freedom from arrest had been won by the Parliament, in the Fronde. They had decreed that any one taken into custody one day must be produced for trial the next and his detention justified. This safeguard was shortlived. The law was defied and ignored by Louis XIV who invented the *lettres de cachet*, or sealed warrants, which decreed arbitrary arrest without reason given or the smallest excuse made for the committal. It came to be a common thing that persons who were not even

suspected of crimes, and who had certainly never been guilty of crimes, were caught up and imprisoned indefinitely. They might lie for years in the Bastile or Vincennes, utterly uncared for and forgotten, kept in custody not because anybody was set upon their remaining but because nobody was interested in their release. In the absence of any statement of the offense no one could say whether or not it was purged and no one was concerned as to whether the necessity for punishment still survived. These *lettres de cachet* were abundantly in evidence, for they were signed in blank by the King himself and countersigned by one of his ministers whenever it was desired to make use of one.

It may be well to explain here that it was customary for the King of France to make his sovereign will known by addressing a communication to the various State functionaries in the form of a letter which was open or closed. If the former, it was a "patent," it bore the King's signature, it was countersigned by a minister and the great Seal of State was appended. This was the form in which all ordinances or grants of privileges appeared. These "letters patent" were registered and endorsed by the Parliament. But there was no check upon the closed letter or *lettre de cachet*, famous in the history of tyranny, as the secret method of making known the King's pleasure. This was folded and sealed with the King's small seal, and although it was a private communication it had all the weight of the royal authority. It became the warrant for the arbitrary arrest, at any time and without any reason given, of any person who, upon the strength of it, was forthwith committed to a State prison. The chief ministers and the head of the police had always *lettres de cachet* in stock, signed in blank, but all in due form, and they could be completed at any time, by order, or of their own free will, by inserting the name of the unfortunate individual whose liberty was to be forfeited. Arrest on a *lettre de cachet*, as has been said, sometimes meant prolonged imprisonment purposely or only because the identity of the individual or the cause of the arrest was forgotten.

Society was horribly vicious and corrupt in the time of Louis XIV. Evil practices prevailed throughout the nation. Profligacy was general among the better classes and the lower ranks committed the most atrocious crimes. While the courtiers openly followed the example set by their self-indulgent young monarch, an ardent devotee of pleasure, the country was over-run with thieves and desperadoes. Assassination was common, by the open

attack of hired bravos or secretly by the infamous administration of poison. Security was undermined and numbers in every condition of life were put out of the way. The epoch of the poisoners presently to be described is one of the darkest pages in the annals of the Bastile. Cheating at cards and in every form of gambling was shamelessly prevalent, and defended on the specious excuse that it was merely correcting fortune. Prominent persons of rank and fashion such as the Chevalier de Gramont and the Marquis de Saissac won enormous sums unfairly. The passion for play was so general and so engrossing that no opportunity of yielding to it was lost; people gambled wherever they met, in public places, in private houses, in carriages when travelling on the road. Cheating at play was so common that a special officer, the Grand Provost, was attached to the Court to bring delinquents immediately to trial. Many dishonest practices were called in to assist, false cards were manufactured on purpose and cardmakers were a part of the great households. Strict laws imposed heavy penalties upon those caught loading dice or marking packs. Fraud was conspicuously frequent in the Italian and most popular game of *hoca* played with thirty balls on a board, each ball containing a number on a paper inside.



The Bastile

The first stone of this historic fortress was laid in 1370. For the first two centuries it was a military stronghold, and whoever held the Bastile overawed Paris. The terrors of the Bastile as a state prison were greatest during the ministry of Richelieu. From the beginning of the revolution this prison was a special object of attack by the populace. On July 14, 1789, it was stormed by the people and forced to surrender.

Later in the reign, the rage for play grew into a perfect madness. *Hoca*, just mentioned, although it had been indicted by two popes in Rome, and although, in Paris, the Parliament, the magistrates and the six guilds of merchants had petitioned for its suppression, held the lead. Other games of chance little less popular were *lansquenet*, *hazard*, *portique* and *trou-madame*. Colossal sums were lost and won. A hundred thousand crowns changed hands at a sitting. Madame de Montespan, the notorious favorite, lost, one Christmas Day, 700,000 crowns and got back 300,000 by a stake upon only three cards. It was possible at *hoca* to lose or win fifty or sixty times a stake in one quarter of an hour. During a campaign, officers played incessantly and leading generals of the army were among the favorite players with the King, when invited to the palace. The police fulminated vainly against the vice, and would have prohibited play among the people, but did not dare to suggest that the court should set the example.

Extravagance and ostentation being the aim and fashion of all, every means was tried to fill the purse. The Crown was assailed on all sides by the needy, seeking places at court. Fathers sent their sons to Paris from the provinces to ingratiate themselves with great people and to pay court in particular to rich widows and dissolute old dowagers eager to marry again. Heiresses were frequently waylaid and carried off by force. Abduction was then as much the rule as are *mariages de convenance* in Paris nowadays. Friends and relations aided and abetted the abductor, if the lady's servants made resistance.

The state of Paris was shocking. Disturbances in the street were chronic, murders were frequent and robbery was usually accompanied with violence, especially in the long winter nights. The chief offenders were soldiers of the

garrison and the pages and lackeys of the great houses, who still carried arms. A police ordinance finally forbade them to wear swords and it was enforced by exemplary punishment. A duke's footman and a duchess's page, who attacked and wounded a student on the Pont Neuf, were arrested, tried and forthwith hanged despite the protests and petitions of their employers. Further ordinances regulated the demeanor of servants who could not be employed without producing their papers, and now in addition to their swords being taken away, they were deprived of their canes and sticks on account of their brutal treatment of inoffensive people. They were forbidden to gather in crowds and they might not enter the gardens of the Tuileries or Luxembourg.

It was not enough to repress the insolent valets and check the midnight excesses of the worst characters. The importunity of the sturdy vagabond, who lived by begging, called for stern repression. These ruffians had long been tolerated. They enjoyed certain privileges and immunities, they were organised in dangerous bands strong enough to make terms with the police and they possessed a sanctuary in the heart of Paris, where they defied authority. This "Court of Miracles," as it was called, had three times withstood a siege by commissaries and detachments of troops, who were repulsed with showers of stones. Then the head of the police went at the head of a strong force and cleared the place out, allowing all to escape; and when it had been thus emptied, their last receptacle was swept entirely away. Other similar refuges were suppressed,—the enclosures of the Temple and the Abbey of St. Germain-des-Près, and the Hotel Soissons, property of the royal family of Savoy, which had long claimed the right to give shelter to malefactors.

The prisons of Paris were in a deplorable and disgraceful state at this period, as appears from a picture drawn by a magistrate about the middle of the seventeenth century. They were without light or air, horribly overcrowded by the dregs of humanity and a prey to foul diseases which prisoners freely communicated to one another. For-l'Évêque was worse then than it had ever been; the whole building was in ruins and must soon fall to the ground. The Greater and Lesser Châtelets were equally unhealthy and of dimensions too limited for their population, the walls too high, the dungeons too deep down in the bowels of the earth. The only prison not absolutely lethal was the Conciergerie, yet some of its cells and chambers

possessed no sort of drainage. The hopelessness of the future was the greatest infliction; once committed, no one could count on release: to be thrown into prison was to be abandoned and forgotten.

The records kept at the Bastile were in irremediable disorder. Even the names of the inmates were in most cases unknown, from the custom of giving new arrivals a false name. By the King's order, his Minister once applied to M. de Besmaus, the governor, for information as to the cause of detention of two prisoners, a priest called Gerard, who had been confined for eight years, and a certain Pierre Rolland, detained for three years. The inquiry elicited a report that no such person as Rolland appeared upon the monthly pay lists for rations. Gerard, the priest, was recognised by his numerous petitions for release. The Minister called for a full nominal list of all prisoners and the reasons for their confinement, but the particulars were not forthcoming. This was on the conclusion of the Peace of Ryswick, when the King desired to mark the general rejoicings by a great gaol delivery.

Many causes contributed to fill the Bastile and other State prisons in the reign of Louis XIV. Let us take these more in detail. The frauds committed by dishonest agents dealing with public money, the small fry, as guilty as Fouquet, but on a lesser scale, consigned many to prison. Severe penalties were imposed upon defamatory writers and the whole of the literary crew concerned in the publication of libellous attacks upon the King,—printers, binders, distributors of this dangerous literature,—found their way to the Bastile, to the galleys, even to the scaffold. Presently when Louis, always a bigoted Catholic, became more and more intolerant under the influence of the priests, the revived persecution of the Protestants filled the gaols and galleys with the sufferers for their faith. Colbert had long protected them, but at the death of this talented minister who, as he wrote Madame de Maintenon, "thought more of finance than religion," Le Tellier and Louvois, who succeeded him, raged furiously against the Protestants and many cruel edicts were published. A fierce fanatical desire to proselytise, to procure an abjuration of creed by every violent and oppressive means possessed all classes, high and low. The doors of sick people were forced to admit the priests who came to administer the sacraments, without being summoned.

On one occasion the pot-boy of a wine shop who, with his master, professed the new faith, was mortally wounded in a street fight. A priest visited him as he lay dying and besought him to make confession. A low crowd forthwith collected before the house, to the number of seven or eight hundred, and rose in stormy riot, attacked the door with sticks and stones, broke it down, smashed all the windows and forced their way in, crying, "Give us up the Huguenots or we will set fire to the house." The police then came upon the scene and restored quiet, but the man died, to the last refusing to confess. Outrages of this kind were frequent. Again, the son of a new convert removed his hat when the procession of the Host passed by, but remained standing instead of falling on his knees. He was violently attacked and fled to his home, pursued by the angry crowd who would have burned the house to the ground. The public feeling was so strong that many called for the quartering of troops in Paris to assist in the good work of conversion, a suggestion which bore fruit presently in the infamous *dragonnades*, when the soldiers pillaged and laid waste the provinces.

The passion for proselytising was carried to the extent of bribing the poverty stricken to change their religion. Great pressure was brought to bear upon Huguenot prisoners who were in the Bastile. A number of priests came in to use their persuasive eloquence upon the recusants, and many reports are preserved in the correspondence of M. de Besmaus, the governor, of their energetic efforts. "I am doing my best," says one priest, "and have great hopes of success." "I think," writes another, "I have touched Mademoiselle de Lamon and the Mademoiselles de la Fontaine. If I may have access to them I shall be able to satisfy you." The governor was the most zealous of all in seeking to secure the abjuration of the new religion.

It may be noted here that this constant persecution, emphasised by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (which had conceded full liberty of conscience), had the most disastrous consequences upon French industry. The richest manufacturers and the most skillful and industrious artisans were to be found among the French Protestants and there was soon a steady drain outwards of these sources of commercial prosperity. In this continuous exodus of capital and intelligent labor began the material decadence of France and transferred the enterprise of these people elsewhere, notably to England. A contemporary pamphlet paints the situation in sombre colors;—"Nothing is to be seen but deserted farms,

impecunious landed proprietors, bankrupt traders, creditors in despair, peasants dying of starvation, their dwellings in ruins." On every side and in every commodity there was a terrible depreciation of values,—land nearly worthless, revenues diminished, and besides a new and protracted war had now to be faced.

Some idea of the condition of the interior of the Bastile in those days may be best realised by a few extracts from the original archives preserved from the sack of the hated castle when Paris rose in revolution. Some documents are extant, written by a certain Comte de Pagan, who was thrown into the State prison charged with sorcery. He had boasted that he could, when he chose, destroy Louis XIV by magic. His arrest was immediate and his detention indefinitely prolonged. His letters contain the most piteous appeals for money.

"Monseigneur and most reverent patron," he writes to Colbert from the Bastile under date of the 8th of November, 1661, "I supplicate you most humbly to accord this poor, unfortunate being his liberty. Your lordship will most undoubtedly be rewarded for so merciful a deed as the release of a wretched creature who has languished here for nine years devoid of hope." In a second petition, reiterating his prayer for clemency, he adds, "It is now impossible for me to leave the room in which I am lodged as I am almost naked. Do send me a little money so that I may procure a coat and a few shirts." Again, "May I beseech you to remember that I have been incarcerated for eleven years and eight months and have endured the worst hardships ever inflicted on a man for the want of covering against the bitter cold.... Monseigneur, I am seventy-eight years of age, a prey to all manner of bodily infirmities; I do not possess a single friend in the world, and worse still, I am not worth one sou and am sunk in an abyss of wretchedness. I swear to you, Monseigneur, that I am compelled to go to bed in the dark because I cannot buy a farthing candle; I have worn the same shirt without removing or changing it for seven whole months."

This appeal is endorsed with a brief minute signed by Colbert. "Let him have clothes." The year following a new petition is rendered. "Your Excellency will forgive me if I entreat him to remember that thirteen months ago he granted me 400 francs to relieve my miseries. But I am once more in the same or even worse condition and I again beg humbly for help.

I have been quite unable to pay the hire of the furniture in my chamber and the upholsterer threatens to remove the goods and I shall soon be compelled to lie on the bare floor. I have neither light nor fuel and am almost without clothes. You, Monseigneur, are my only refuge and I beseech your charitable help or I shall be found dead of cold in my cell. For the love of God, entreat the King to give me my liberty after the thirteen years spent here."

This last appeal is dated November 28th, 1665, but there is no record of his ultimate disposal. It is stated in an earlier document that Cardinal Mazarin had been willing to grant a pardon to this prisoner if he would agree to be conveyed to the frontier under escort and sent across it as a common criminal, but the Count had refused to accept this dishonoring condition which he pleaded would cast a stigma upon his family name. He offered, however, to leave France directly he was released and seek any domicile suggested to him where he might be safe from further oppression. Cardinal Mazarin seems to have been mercifully inclined, but died before he could extend clemency to this unhappy victim of arbitrary power.

The Bastile was used sometimes as a sanctuary to withdraw an offender who had outraged the law and could not otherwise be saved from reprisal. A notable case was that of René de l'Hopital, Marquis de Choisy, who lived on his estates like a savage tyrant. In 1659 he was denounced by a curé to the ecclesiastical authorities for his crimes. The marquis with a couple of attendants waylaid the priest on the high road and attacked the curé whom he grievously wounded. The priest commended himself to God and was presently stunned by a murderous blow on the jaw from the butt end of a musket. Then the Marquis, to make sure his victim was really dead, rode his horse over the recumbent body and then stabbed it several times with his sword. But help came and the curé was rescued still alive, and strange to say, recovered, although it was said he had received a hundred and twenty wounds.

The entire religious hierarchy in France espoused the priest's cause. The Marquis was haled before several provincial courts of justice. He would undoubtedly have been convicted of murder and sentenced to death, for Louis XIV would seldom spare the murderer of a priest, but the l'Hopital family had great influence at Court and won a pardon for the criminal. The

Parliament of Paris or High Court of Justice boldly resisted the royal decree and the marquis would still have been executed had he not been consigned for safety to the "King's Castle," the Bastile. He passed subsequently to the prison of For-l'Évêque, from which he was released with others on the entry of the King to Paris, at his marriage. Still the vindictive Parliament pursued him and he would hardly have escaped the scaffold had he not fled the country.

In an age when so much respect was exacted for religious forms and ceremonies, imprisonment in the Bastile was promptly inflicted upon all guilty of blasphemous conduct or who openly ridiculed sacred things. The records are full of cases in which prisoners have been committed to gaol for impiety, profane swearing at their ill luck with the dice or at *hoca*. A number of the Prince de Condé's officers were sent to the Bastile for acting a disgraceful parody of the procession of the Host, in which a besom was made to represent a cross, a bucket was filled at a neighboring pump and called holy water, and the sham priests chanted the *De Profundis* as they went through the streets to administer the last sacrament to a pretended moribund.

A very small offense gained the pain of imprisonment. One foolish person was committed because he was dissatisfied with his name Cardon (thistle), and changed it to *Cardone*, prefixing the particle "de" which signifies nobility, claiming that he was a member of the illustrious family of De Cardone. It appears from the record, however, that he also spoke evil of M. de Maurepas, a minister of State.

Still another class found themselves committed to the Bastile. The parental Louis, as he grew more sober and staid, insisted more and more on external decorum and dealt sharply with immoral conduct among his courtiers. The Bastile was used very much as a police station or a reformatory. Young noblemen were sent there for riotous conduct in the streets, for an affray with the watch and the maltreatment of peaceful citizens. The Duc d'Estrées and the Duc de Mortemart were imprisoned as wastrels who bet and gambled with sharpers. "The police officers cannot help complaining that the education of these young dukes had been sadly neglected," reads the report. So the Royal Castle was turned for the nonce into a school, and a master of mathematics, a drawing master and a Jesuit professor of history

were admitted to instruct the neglected youths. The same Duc d'Estrées paid a second visit for quarrelling with the Comte d'Harcourt and protesting against the interference of the marshals to prevent a duel.

The King nowadays set his face against all loose living. The Comte de Montgomery, for leading a debauched and scandalous life on his estates, was committed to the Bastile, where he presently died. He was a Protestant and the question of his burial came up before the Ministry, who wrote the governor that, "His Majesty is very indifferent whether he (Montgomery) be buried in one place rather than another and still more in what manner the ceremony is performed."

The report that the Prince de Léon, being a prince of the blood, a son of the Duc de Rohan, was about to marry a ballet dancer, Mademoiselle Florence, entailed committal to the Bastile, not on the Prince but on the girl. "Florence was arrested this morning while the Prince was at Versailles," writes the chief of the police. "Her papers were seized.... She told the officer who arrested her she was not married, that she long foresaw what would happen, that she would be only too happy to retire into a convent and that she had a hundred times implored the Prince to give his consent. I have informed the Prince's father, the Duc de Rohan, of this." The Prince was furious upon hearing of the arrest and refused to forgive his relations. The Duc de Rohan was willing to supply Mademoiselle Florence with all necessaries to make captivity more tolerable, but great difficulty was found in getting him to pay the bill. The Duc de Rohan was so great a miser that he allowed his wife and children to die of hunger. The Bastile bill included charges for doctor and nurse as Mademoiselle de Florence was brought to bed of a child in prison. What with the expenses of capture and gaol fees it amounted to 5,000 francs. The end of this incident was that the Prince de Léon, while his lady love was in the Bastile, eloped with a supposed heiress, Mademoiselle de Roquelaure, who was ugly, hunch-backed and no longer young. The Prince ran off with her from a convent, moved to do so by his father's promise of an allowance, which the miserly duke never paid. The bride was recaptured and sent back to the cloister in which her mother had placed her to avoid the necessity of giving her any dowry. The married couple, when at last they came together, had a bad time of it, as neither of the parents would help them with funds and they lived in great poverty.

A strange episode, forcibly illustrating the arbitrary character of Louis XIV and his fine contempt for international rights, was the case of the Armenian Patriarch, Avedik, who was an inmate of the Bastile and also of Mont St. Michel. The Armenian Catholics, and especially the Jesuits, had reason to complain of Avedik's high handed treatment, and the French ambassador interfered by paying a large price for the Patriarch's removal from his sacred office. Certain schismatics of the French party secured his reinstatement by raising the bid; and now the French ambassador seized the person of Avedik, who was put on board a French ship and conveyed to Messina, then Spanish territory, where he was cast into the prison of the Inquisition. This abduction evoked loud protest in Constantinople, but the French disavowed it, although it had certainly met with the approval of Louis XIV. Avedik would have languished and died forgotten in Messina, but without waiting instructions, the French consul had extracted him from the prison of the Inquisition and passed him on to Marseilles.

Great precautions were taken to keep his arrival secret. If the poor, kidnapped foreigner, who spoke no language but Turkish and Armenian, should chance to be recognised, the report of his sudden death was to be announced and no doubt it would soon be justified in fact. Otherwise he was to be taken quietly across France from Marseilles, on the Mediterranean, to Mont St. Michel on the Normandy coast, where his kidnappers were willing to treat him well. The King expressly ordered that he should have "a room with a fire place, linen and so forth, as his Majesty had no desire that the prisoner should suffer, provided economy is observed.... He is not to be subjected to perpetual abstinence and may have meat when he asks for it." Of course an attempt was made to convert the Patriarch, already a member of the Greek Church, to Catholicism as preached in France, although the interchange of ideas was not easy, and the monk sent to confess him could not do so for want of a common language. Eventually Avedik was brought to Paris and lodged in the Bastile, where an interpreter was found for him in the person of the Abbé Renaudot, a learned Oriental scholar.

Meanwhile a hue and cry was raised for the missing Patriarch. One of his servants was traced to Marseilles and was promptly arrested and hidden away in the hospital of the galley slaves. Louis and his ministers stoutly denied that Avedik was in France, and he was very strictly guarded lest the

fact of his kidnapping should leak out. No one saw him but the person who took him his food, and they understood each other only by signs. Avedik was worked up to make a written statement that he owed his arrest to English intrigues, and this was to be held as an explanation should the Porte become too pressing in its inquiries. It is clear that the French Government would gladly have seen the last of Avedik and hesitated what course to adopt with him: whether to keep him by force, win him over, transfer him to the hands of the Pope, send him to Persia or let him go straight home. These questions were in a measure answered by a marginal note endorsed on the paper submitting them. “Would it be a blessing or would it be a misfortune if he were to die?” asks the Minister Pontchartrain; and the rather suspicious answer was presently given by his death. But an official report was drawn up, declaring that he had long enjoyed full liberty, that he received every attention during his illness, that his death was perfectly natural and that he died a zealous Catholic. Pontchartrain went further and, after reiterating that death was neither violent nor premature, added that it was entirely due to the immoderate use of brandy and baleful drugs. Avedik had grown very corpulent during his imprisonment, but there was no proof of the charge of intemperance.

The most heinous crimes disgraced the epoch of Louis XIV, and in all, the Bastile played a prominent part. There was first the gigantic frauds and peculations of Fouquet as already described; then came the conspiracy of the Chevalier de Rohan, who was willing to sell French fortresses to foreign enemies; and on this followed the horrible affair of the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, the secret poisoner of her own people. The use of poison was for a time a wholesale practice, and although the special court established for the trial of those suspected held its sessions in private, the widespread diffusion of the crime was presently revealed beyond all question. There were reasons of State why silence should be preserved; the high rank of many of the criminals and their enormous number threatened, if too openly divulged, to shake society to its base. Some two hundred and thirty of the accused were afterwards convicted and sent to prison and thirty-four more were condemned to death.

Conspiracies against the life of the King had been frequent. We may mention among them that of the Marquis de Bonnesson, of the Protestant Roux de Marcilly, who would have killed Louis to avenge the wrongs of his

co-religionists, and another Protestant, Comte de Sardan, who sought to stir up disaffection in four great provinces,—which were to renounce allegiance to France and pass under the dominion of the Prince of Orange and the King of Spain. The most dangerous and extensive plot was that of Louis de Rohan, a dissolute young nobleman, who had been a playmate of the King and the favorite of ladies of the highest rank, but who had been ruined by gambling and a loose life until his fortunes had sunk to the lowest ebb. He found an evil counsellor in a certain retired military officer, the Sieur de Latréaumont, no less a pauper than De Rohan, and hungry for money to retrieve his position. Together they made overtures to the Dutch and Spaniards to open the way for a descent upon the Normandy coast. Their price was a million livres. Several disaffected Normandy nobles joined the plot, and as it was unsafe to trust to the post, an emissary, Van den Ende, an ancient Dutch professor, was sent in person to the Low Countries to deal with the Spanish general. He obtained liberal promises of cash and pension, and returned to Paris, where he was promptly arrested at the barrier. The police had discovered the conspiracy and De Rohan was already in custody. De Latréaumont was surprised in bed, had resisted capture, had been mortally wounded and had died, leaving highly compromising papers.

Louis XIV, bitterly incensed against the Chevalier, whom he had so intimately known, determined to make an example of him and his confederates. A special tribunal was appointed for their trial, some sixty persons in all. Abundant evidence was forthcoming, for half Normandy was eager to confess and escape the traitor's fate. Some very great names were mentioned as implicated, the son of the Prince de Condé among the rest. The King now wisely resolved to limit the proceedings, lest too much importance should be given to a rather contemptible plot. De Rohan's guilt was fully proved. He was reported to have said: "If I can only draw my sword against the King in a serious rebellion I shall die happy." When he saw there was no hope for him, the Chevalier tried to soften the King by full confession. It did not serve him, and he was sentenced to be beheaded and his creature, Van den Ende, to be hanged in front of the Bastile. De Rohan was spared torture before execution, but Van den Ende and another suffered the "boot." The King was vainly solicited to grant pardon to De Rohan, but was inflexible, declaring it was in the best interests of France that traffic with a foreign enemy should be punished with the extreme rigor

of the law. It cannot be stated positively that there were no other conspiracies against Louis XIV, but none were made public.

CHAPTER VIII
THE TERROR OF POISON

The Marquise de Brinvilliers—Homicidal mania—Mysterious death of her father, M. D'Aubray—Death of her eldest brother and her second brother—Sainte Croix's sudden death—Fatal secret betrayed—Marchioness flies to England—Brought to Paris—Her trial—Torture and cruel sentence—Others suspected—Pennautier—Trade in poisoning—The *Chambre Ardente*—La Voisin—Great people implicated—Wholesale sentences—The galleys, or forced labor at the oar a common punishment—War galleys—Manned with difficulty—Illegal detention—Horrors of the galleys.

Paris was convulsed and shaken to its roots in 1674, when the abominable crimes of the Marchioness of Brinvilliers were laid bare. They have continued to horrify the whole world. Here was a beautiful woman of good family, of quiet demeanor, seemingly soft-hearted and sweet tempered, who nevertheless murdered her nearest relations,—father, brother, sisters, her husband and her own children by secret and detestable practices. It could have been nothing less than homicidal mania in its worst development. The rage to kill, or, more exactly, to test the value of the lethal weapons she recklessly wielded, seized her under the guise of a high, religious duty to visit the hospitals to try the effects of her poisons on the sick poor. There were those at the time who saw in the discovery of her murderous processes the direct interposition of Providence. First, there was the sudden death of her principal accomplice, and the sure indications found among the papers he left; next, the confirmatory proofs afforded by a servant who had borne the "question" without opening his lips, and only confessed at the scaffold; last of all, the guilty woman's arrest in Liége on the last day that the French king's authority was paramount in that city; and more, there was the fact that when taken, she was in possession of papers indispensable to secure her own conviction.

Marie-Madeleine d'Aubray was beautiful, the daughter of the d'Aubray who filled the high legal office of Lieutenant-Criminel, and she married the Marquis de Brinvilliers at the age of twenty-one. She was possessed of great personal attraction: a small woman of slight, exquisite figure, her face round and regular, her complexion extraordinarily fair, her hair abundant

and of a dark chestnut color. Everything promised a happy life for the young people. They were drawn together by strong liking, they were fairly rich and held their heads high in the best circle of the court. They lived together happily for some years, and five children were born to them, but presently they fell into extravagant ways and wasted their substance. The Marquis became a roué and a gambler, and left his wife very much alone and exposed to temptation, and especially to the marked attentions of a certain Godin de St. Croix, a young, handsome and seductive gallant, whom the Marquis had himself introduced and welcomed to his house. At the trial it was urged that this St. Croix had been the real criminal; he is described as a demon of violent and unbridled passion, who had led the Marchioness astray, a statement never proved.

The liaison soon became public property, but the husband was altogether indifferent to his wife's misconduct, having a disreputable character of his own. The father and brothers strongly disapproved and reproached the Marchioness fiercely. The elder d'Aubray, quite unable to check the scandal, at last obtained a *lettre de cachet*, an order of summary imprisonment, against St. Croix, and the lover was arrested in the Marchioness' carriage, seated by her side. He was committed at once to the Bastile, where he became the cellmate of an Italian generally called Exili; although his real name is said to have been Egidi, while his occult profession, according to contemporary writers, was that of an artist in poisons. From this chance prison acquaintance flowed the whole of the subsequent crimes. When St. Croix was released from the Bastile, he obtained the release also of Exili and, taking him into his service, the two applied themselves to the extensive manufacture of poisons, assisted by an apothecary named Glaser. St. Croix was supposed to have reformed. When once more free, he married, became reserved and grew devout. Secretly he renewed his intimacy with the Marchioness and persuaded her to get rid of her near relatives in order to acquire the whole of the d'Aubray property; and he provided her with the poisons for the purpose.

M. d'Aubray had forgiven his daughter, and had taken her with him to his country estate at Offémont in the autumn of 1666. The Marchioness treated him with the utmost affection and seemed to have quite abandoned her loose ways. Suddenly, soon after their arrival, M. d'Aubray was seized with some mysterious malady, accompanied by constant vomitings and

intolerable sufferings. Removed to Paris next day, he was attended by a strange doctor, who had not seen the beginning of the attack, and speedily died in convulsions. It was suggested as the cause of his death, that he had been suffering from gout driven into the stomach.

The inheritance was small, and there were four children to share it. The Marchioness had two brothers and two sisters. One sister was married and the mother of two children, the other was a Carmelite nun. The eldest brother, Antoine d'Aubray, succeeded to his father's office as Lieutenant-Criminel, and within four years he also died under suspicious circumstances. He lived in Paris, and upon entering his house one day called for a drink. A new valet, named La Chaussée, brought him a glass of wine and water. It was horribly bitter to the taste, and d'Aubray threw the greater part away, expressing his belief that the rascal, La Chaussée, wanted to poison him. It was like liquid fire, and others, who tasted it, declared that it contained vitriol. La Chaussée, apologising, recovered the glass, threw the rest of the liquid into the fire and excused himself by saying that a fellow servant had just used the tumbler as a medicine glass. This incident was presently forgotten, but next spring, at a dinner given by M. d'Aubray, guests and host were seized with a strange illness after eating a tart or *vol au vent*, and M. d'Aubray never recovered his health. He "pined visibly" after his return to Paris, losing appetite and flesh, and presently died, apparently of extreme weakness, on the 17th of June, 1670. A post mortem was held, but disclosed nothing, and the death was attributed to "malignant humours," a ridiculously vague expression showing the medical ignorance of the times.

The second brother did not survive. He too was attacked with illness, and died of the same loss of power and vitality. An autopsy resulted in a certain suspicion of foul play. The doctors reported that the lungs of the deceased were ulcerated, the liver and heart burned up and destroyed. Undoubtedly there had been noxious action, but it could not be definitely referred to poison. No steps, however, were taken by the police to inquire into the circumstances of this sudden death.

Meanwhile the Marchioness had been deserted by her husband, and she gave herself up to reckless dissipation. When St. Croix abandoned her also, she resolved to commit suicide. "I shall put an end to my life," she wrote

him in a letter afterwards found among his papers, “by using what you gave me, the preparation of Glaser.” Courage failed her, and now chance or strange fortune intervened with terrible revelations. St. Croix’s sudden death betrayed the secret of the crime.

He was in the habit of working at a private laboratory in the Place Maubert, where he distilled his lethal drugs. One day as he bent over the furnace, his face protected by a glass mask, the glass burst unexpectedly, and he inhaled a breath of the poisonous fumes, which stretched him dead upon the spot. Naturally there could be no destruction of compromising papers, and these at once fell into the hands of the police. Before they could be examined, the Marchioness, terrified at the prospect of impending detection, committed herself hopelessly by her imprudence. She went at once to the person to whom the papers had been confided and begged for a casket in which were a number of her letters. She was imprudent enough to offer a bribe of fifty louis, and was so eager in her appeal, that suspicion arose and her request was refused. Ruin stared her in the face, she went home, got what money she could and fled from Paris.

The casket was now opened, and fully explained her apprehensions. On top was a paper written by St. Croix which ran: “I humbly entreat the person into whose hands this casket may come to convey it to the Marchioness Brinvilliers, rue Neuve St. Paul; its contents belong to her and solely concern her and no one else in the world. Should she die before me I beg that everything within the box may be burned without examination.” In addition to the letters from the Marchioness, the casket contained a number of small parcels and phials full of drugs, such as antimony, corrosive sublimate, vitriol in various forms. These were analysed, and some portion of them administered to animals, which immediately died.

The law now took action. The first arrest was that of La Chaussée, whose complicity with St. Croix was undoubted. The man had been in St. Croix’s service, he had lived with Antoine d’Aubray, and at the seizure of St. Croix’s effects, he had rashly protested against the opening of the casket. He was committed to the Châtelet and put on his trial with the usual preliminary torture of the “boot.” He stoutly refused to make confession at first, but spoke out when released from the rack. His conviction followed, on a charge of having murdered the two Lieutenants-Criminel, the

d'Aubrays, father and son. His sentence was, to be broken alive on the wheel, and he was duly executed.

This was the first act in the criminal drama. The Marchioness was still at large. She had sought an asylum in England, and was known to be in London. Colbert, the French minister, applied in his king's name for her arrest and removal to France. But no treaty of extradition existed in those days, and the laws of England were tenacious. Even Charles II, the paid pensioner of Louis and his very submissive ally, could not impose his authority upon a free people; and the English, then by no means friendly with France, would have resented the arbitrary arrest of even the most dastard criminal for an offence committed beyond the kingdom. History does not say exactly how it was compassed, but the Marchioness did leave England, and crossed to the Low Countries, where she took refuge in a convent in the city of Liége.

Four years passed, but her retreat became known to the police of Paris. Desgrez, a skilful officer, famous for his successes as a detective, was forthwith despatched to inveigle her away. He assumed the disguise of an abbé, and called at the convent. Being a good looking young man of engaging manners, he was well received by the fugitive French woman, sick and weary of conventual restriction. The Marchioness, suspecting nothing, gladly accepted the offer of a drive in the country with the astute Desgrez, who promptly brought her under escort to the French frontier as a prisoner. A note of her reception at the Conciergerie is among the records, to the effect, that, "La Brinvilliers, who had been arrested by the King's order in the city of Liége, was brought to the prison under a warrant of the Court."

On the journey from Liége she had tried to seduce one of her escort into passing letters to a friend, whom she earnestly entreated to recover certain papers she had left at the convent. These, however, one of them of immense importance, her full confession, had already been secured by Desgrez, showing that the Abbess had been cognisant of the intended arrest. The Marchioness yielded to despair when she heard of the seizure of her papers and would have killed herself, first by swallowing a long pin and next by eating glass. This confession is still extant and will be read with horror—the long list of her crimes and debaucheries set forth with cold-blooded, plain

speaking. It was not produced at her trial, which was mainly a prolonged series of detailed interrogatories to which she made persistent denials. As the proceedings drew slowly on, all Paris watched with shuddering anxiety, and the King himself, who was absent on a campaign, sent peremptory orders to Colbert that no pains should be spared to bring all proof against the guilty woman. Conviction was never in doubt. One witness declared that she had made many attempts to get the casket from St. Croix; another, that she exulted in her power to rid herself of her enemies, declaring it was easy to give them "a pistol shot in their soup;" a third, that she had exhibited a small box, saying, "it is very small but there is enough inside to secure many successions (inheritances)." Hence the euphemism *poudre de succession*, so often employed at that time to signify "deadly poison."

The accused still remained obstinately dumb, but at last an eloquent priest, l'Abbé Pirot, worked upon her feelings of contrition, and obtained a full avowal, not only of her own crimes, but those also of her accomplices. Sentence was at once pronounced, and execution quickly followed. Torture, both ordinary and extraordinary, was to be first inflicted. The ordeal of water, three buckets-full, led her to ask if they meant to drown her, as assuredly she could not, with her small body, drink so much. After the torture she was to make the *amende honorable* and the acknowledgment, candle in hand, that vengeance and greed had tempted her to poison her father, brothers and sisters. Then her right hand was to be amputated as a parricide; but this penalty was remitted. The execution was carried out under very brutal conditions. No sooner were the prison doors opened than a mob of great ladies rushed in to share and gloat over her sufferings, among them the infamous Comtesse de Soissons, who was proved later to have been herself a poisoner. An enormous crowd of spectators, at least one hundred thousand, were assembled in the streets, at the windows and on the roofs, and she was received with furious shouts. Close by the tumbril rode Desgrez, the officer who had captured her in Liége. Yet she showed the greatest fortitude. "She died as she had lived," writes Madame de Sévigné, "resolutely. Now she is dispersed into the air. Her poor little body was thrown into a fierce furnace, and her ashes blown to the four winds of heaven."

Another person was implicated in this black affair, Reich de Pennautier, Receiver-General of the clergy. When the St. Croix casket was opened, a

promissory note signed by Pennautier had been found. He was suspected of having used poison to remove his predecessor in office. Pennautier was arrested and lodged in the Conciergerie, where he occupied the old cell of Ravaillac for seven days. Then he was put on his trial. He found friends, chief of them the reticent Madame de Brinvilliers, but he had an implacable enemy in the widow of his supposed victim, Madame de St. Laurent, who continually pursued him in the courts. He was, however, backed by Colbert, Archbishop of Paris, and the whole of the French clergy. In the end he was released, emerging as Madame de Sévigné put it, "rather whiter than snow," and he retained his offices until he became enormously rich. Although his character was smirched in this business he faced the world bravely to a green old age.

In France uneasiness was general after the execution of the Brinvilliers and the acquittal of Pennautier. Sinister rumors prevailed that secret poisoning had become quite a trade, facilitated by the existence of carefully concealed offices, where the noxious drugs necessary could be purchased easily by heirs tired of waiting for their succession, and by husbands and wives eager to get rid of one another. Within a year suspicion was strengthened by the picking up of an anonymous letter in the confessional of the Jesuit Church of the rue St. Antoine, stating that a plot was afoot to poison both the King and the Dauphin. The police set inquiries on foot, and traced the projected crime to two persons, Louis Vanens and Robert de la Nurée, the Sieur de Bachimont.

The first of these dabbled openly in love philtres and other unavowable medicines; and he was also suspected of having poisoned the Duke of Savoy some years previously. Bachimont was one of his agents. From this first clue, the police followed the thread of their discoveries, and brought home to a number of people the charge of preparing and selling poisons, two of whom were condemned and executed. A still more important arrest was that of Catherine Deshayes, the wife of one Voisin or Monvoisin, a jeweller. From this moment the affair assumed such serious proportions that it was decided to conduct the trial with closed doors. The authorities constituted a royal tribunal to sit in private at the Arsenal, and to be known to the public as the *Chambre Ardente* or Court of Poisons. La Reynie and another counsellor presided, and observed extreme caution, but were quite unable to keep secret the result of their proceedings. It was soon whispered

through Paris that the crime of poisoning had extensive ramifications, and that many great people, some nearly related to the throne, were compromised with la Voisin. The names were openly mentioned: a Bourbon prince, the Comte de Clermont, the Duchesse de Bouillon, the Princesse de Tingry, one of the Queen's ladies in waiting, and the Marchionesse d'Alluye, who had been an intimate friend of Fouquet. The Duc de Luxembourg and others of the highest rank were consigned to the Bastile. Yet more, the Comtesse de Soissons, the proudest of Cardinal Mazarin's nieces and one of the first of the King's favorites, had, by his special grace, been warned to fly from Paris to escape imprisonment.

No such favor was shown to others. Louis XIV sternly bade La Reynie to spare no one else, to let justice take its course strictly and expose everything; the safety of the public demanded it, and the hideous evil must be extirpated in its very root. There was to be no distinction of persons or of sex in vindicating the law. Such severity was indeed necessary. Although the King wished all the documents in the case to be carefully destroyed, some have been preserved. They exhibit the widespread infamy and almost immeasurable guilt of the criminals. Colbert stigmatised the facts as "things too execrable to be put on paper; amounting to sacrilege, profanity and abomination." The very basest aims inspired the criminals to seek the King's favor; disappointed beauties would have poisoned their rivals and replaced them in the King's affections. The Comtesse de Soissons's would-be victim was the beautiful La Vallière, and Madame de Montespan was suspected of desiring to remove Mdlle. de Fontanges. Madame La Féron attempted the life of her husband, a president of Parliament. The Duc de Luxembourg was accused of poisoning his duchess. M. de Feuquières invited la Voisin to get rid of the uncle and guardian of an heiress he wished to marry. The end of these protracted proceedings was the inevitable retribution that waited on their crimes. Two hundred and forty-six persons had been brought to trial, of whom thirty-six went to the scaffold, after enduring torture, ordinary and extraordinary. Of the rest, some were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, some to banishment, some to the galleys for life. Among those who suffered the extreme penalty were la Voisin, La Vigouroux, Madame de Carada, several priests and Sieur Maillard, who was charged with attempting to poison Colbert and the King himself. The Bastile, Vincennes and every State prison were crowded with

the poisoners, and for years the registers of castles and fortresses contained the names of inmates committed by the *Chambre Ardente* of the Arsenal.

The edict which dissolved this special tribunal laid down stringent laws to protect the public against future poisoning. A clean sweep was made of the charlatans, the pretended magicians who came from abroad and imposed upon the credulity of the French people, who united sacrilege and impious practices with the manufacture and distribution of noxious drugs. Several clauses in the edict dealt with poisons, describing their action and effect,—in some cases instantaneous, in others slow, gradually undermining health and originating mysterious maladies, that proved fatal in the end. The sale of deleterious substances was strictly regulated, such as arsenic and corrosive sublimate, and the use of poisonous vermin, "snakes, vipers and frogs," in medical prescriptions was forbidden.

A few words more as to the Comtesse de Soissons, who was suffered to fly from France, but could find no resting place. Her reputation preceded her, and she was refused admittance into Antwerp. In Flanders she ingratiated herself with the Duke of Parma, and lived under his protection for several years. Finally she appeared in Madrid, and was received at court. Then the young Queen of Spain died suddenly with all the symptoms of poisoning, and Madame de Soissons was immediately suspected, for unexpected and mysterious deaths always followed in her trail. She was driven from the country, and died a wanderer in great poverty.

No account of the means of repression of those days in France would be complete without including the galleys,—the system of enforced labor at the oars, practised for many centuries by all the Mediterranean nations, and dating back to classical times. These ancient warships, making at best but six miles an hour by human effort under the lash, are in strong contrast with the modern ironclad impelled by steam. But the Venetians and the Genoese owned fine fleets of galleys and won signal naval victories with them. France long desired to rival these powers, and Henry III, when returning from Poland to mount the French throne, paused at Venice to visit the arsenal and see the warships in process of construction. At that time France had thirty galleys afloat, twenty-six of the highest order and worked by convicts (*galeriens*). This number was not always maintained, and in 1662 Colbert, bidding for sea power and striving hard to add to the French navy,

ordered six new ships to be laid down at Marseilles, and sought to buy a number, all standing, from the Republic of Genoa and the Grand Duke of Tuscany. These efforts were crowned with success. In 1670 there were twenty galleys under the French flag, and Colbert wrote the intendant at Marseilles that his Master, Louis XIV, was eager to possess one royal ship which would outvie any hitherto launched on the seas. The increase continued, and in 1677 the fleet numbered thirty, rising to forty-two by the end of the century.

It was not enough to build the ships; the difficulty was to man them. The custom of sending condemned convicts to ply the oar was ancient, and dated back to the reign of Charles VII. But it was little used until Francis I desired to strengthen his navy, and he ordered parliaments and tribunals to consign to the galleys all able-bodied offenders who deserved death and had been condemned to bodily penalties, whatsoever crimes they had committed. The supply of this personnel was precarious, and Colbert wrote to the judges to be more severe with their sentences, and to inflict the galleys in preference to death, a commutation likely to be welcome to the culprit. But some of the parliaments demurred. That of Dijon called it changing the law, and the President, protesting, asked for new ordinances. Colbert put the objection aside arbitrarily. He increased the pressure on the courts and dealt sharply with the keepers of local gaols, who did not use sufficient promptness in sending on their quotas of convicts to Marseilles and Toulon. Many escapes from the chain were made by the way, so carelessly conducted was the transfer.

This “chain,” a disgrace to humanity, was employed in France till quite within our own day. The wretched convicts made their long pilgrimage on foot from all parts of the country to the southern coast. They were chained together in gangs and marched painfully in all weathers, mile after mile, along their weary road under military escort. No arrangements were made for them by the way. They were fed on any coarse food that could be picked up, and were lodged for the night in sheds and stables if any could be found; if not, under the sky. Death took its toll of them ere they reached their destination. They were a scarce commodity and yet no measures were adopted to preserve their health and strength. The ministers in Paris were continually urging the presidents of parliaments to augment the supplies of the condemned, and were told that the system was in fault, that numbers

died in their miserable cells waiting removal, and many made their escape on the journey.

Still the demands of the galleys were insatiable, and many contrivances were adopted to reinforce the crews. Colbert desired to send to them all vagabonds, all sturdy beggars, smugglers and men without visible means of support, but a change in the law was required and the authorities for a time shrank from it. Another expedient was to hire *forcats* from the Duke of Savoy, who had no warships. Turkish and Russian slaves were purchased to work the oars, and Negroes from the Guinea coast. As a measure of retaliation against Spain, prisoners of war of that nation were treated as galley slaves, a custom abhorrent to fair usage. It was carried so far as to include the Red Indians, Iroquois, captured in Canada in the fierce war then in progress. Numbers were taken by unworthy stratagem and passed over to France, and the result was an embittered contest, which endured for four years.

A fresh device was to seek volunteers. These "bonne-voglies," or "bonivoglios," the Italian form most commonly used, were so called because they contracted of their own free will to accept service in the galleys, to live the wretched life of the galley slave, to submit to all his hardships, meagre fare and cruel usage, to be chained to the oar, and driven to labor under the ready lash of the overseers. These free *forcats* soon claimed greater consideration, and it was necessary to treat them more leniently and in a way injurious to discipline in the opinion of the captains and intendants. The convicts were more submissive and more laborious, and still the authorities sought to multiply them. A more disgraceful system than any of these already mentioned was now practised,—that of illegal detention long after the sentence had expired. By an old ordinance, any captain who thus detained a convict was liable to instant dismissal. Other laws, however, fixed a minimum term of ten years' detention, what though the original sentence was considerable. Under Louis XIII it was ruled that six years should be the lowest term, on the ground that during the two first years a galley slave was useless on account of weak physique and want of skill in rowing. Later a good Bishop of Marseilles pleaded the cause of convicts who had endured a term of twice or three times their first sentence. A case was quoted in which *thirty-four*, convicted between 1652 and 1660, and sentenced to two, three or four years, were still languishing in chains in

1674. An official document of that year gives the names of twenty who had served fifteen to twenty years beyond their sentence. The intendant of the galleys at Marseilles reports in 1679, that on examining the registers he had found a certain soldier still in custody who was sentenced by a military court in 1660 to five years, and who had therefore endured fourteen. Again, a man named Caneau was sentenced in 1605 to two years and was still in confinement twelve years later. True it was open to the *galerien* to buy a substitute, a Turkish or other "bonivoglio," but the price, eight hundred or one thousand francs, was scarcely within the reach of the miserable creatures at the *bagnes*.

It is difficult to exaggerate the horrors of the galleys. No wonder that many preferred suicide or self-mutilation to enduring it! Afloat or ashore, the convict's condition was wretched in the extreme. On board ship each individual was chained to his bench, day and night, and the short length of the chain, as well as the nearness of his neighbors, limited his movements. His whole clothing consisted of a single loose blouse of coarse red canvas, with neither shoes nor stockings and little underlinen. His diet was of brown beans cooked in a little oil, black bread and a morsel of bacon. Personal cleanliness was entirely neglected, and all alike suffered from scurvy and were infested with vermin. Labor was incessant while at sea, and the overseers, walking on a raised platform, which ran fore and aft between the benches of rowers, stimulated effort by using their whips upon the bending backs below them. At times silence was strictly required,—as when moving to the attack or creeping away from an enemy and the whole ship's company was gagged with a wooden ball inserted in the mouth. In the barracks ashore, when the ships were laid up for the winter, the convicts' lot was somewhat better, for they were not at the mercy of the elements, and there was no severe labor; but the other conditions, such as diet, clothing and general discomfort, were the same. Now and again if any distinguished visitor arrived at the port, it was the custom to treat them to a cruise in one of the great galleys. The ship was dressed with all her colors, the convicts were washed clean, and wore their best red shirts, and they were trained to salute the great folk who condescended to come on board, by a strange shout of welcome: "Hou! Hou! Hou!" a cry thrice repeated, resembling the roar of a wild beast.

The merciless treatment accorded by Louis XIV to the Protestants, who dared to hold their own religious opinions, will be better realised when it is stated that great numbers of them were consigned to the galleys, to serve for years side by side with the worst malefactors, with savage Iroquois and infidel Turks, and to endure the selfsame barbarities inflicted on the wretched refuse of mankind. No greater stain rests upon the memory of a ruler, whom the weak-kneed sycophants of his age misnamed La Grande Monarque, than this monstrous persecution of honest, honorable people, who were ready to suffer all rather than sacrifice liberty of conscience. How deep and ineffaceable is the stain shall be shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX
THE HORRORS OF THE GALLEYS

Huguenots sent to the galleys—Authentic Memoirs of Jean Marteilhe—Description of galleys—Construction—Method of rowing—Extreme severity of labor—A sea fight—Marteilhe severely wounded—His sufferings—Dunkirk acquired by the English—Huguenot prisoners sent secretly to Havre—Removed to Paris—Included in the chain gang for Marseilles—Cruelties en route—Detention at Marseilles—Renewed efforts to proselytise—More about the galleys—Dress, diet, occupation and discipline—Winter season—Labor constant—Summer season.

No blot upon the reign of Louis XIV is blacker than his treatment of the Huguenots,—most faithful of his subjects could he have perceived it, and the flower of his people. They were hardly more devoted to their faith than they were to France, and it was their faith in God that inspired their patriotism; and yet because they would not abandon their right of conscience they were hounded like a subject, savage people.

A remarkable record of the sufferings endured by one of these victims "for the faith" has come down to us in the "Memoirs of a Protestant, Condemned to the Galleys of France for his Religion." The author is said to have been one Jean Marteilhe, but the book was published anonymously at The Hague in the middle of the eighteenth century. It purports to be "A Comprehensive Account of the Various Distresses he suffered in a Slavery of Thirteen Years and his Constance in supporting almost Every Cruelty that Bigoted Zeal could inflict or Human Nature sustain; also a Description of the Galleys and the Service in which they are Employed." The writer states that he was at last set free at the intercession of the Court of Great Britain in the reign of Queen Anne.

Jean Marteilhe belonged to a family which had been dispersed in the Dragonades, and he resolved to fly the country. Passing through Paris he made for Maestricht in Holland, but was intercepted and detained at Marienburg, a town in the French dominions, where he and his companions were imprisoned and charged with being found upon the frontier without a passport. They were called upon to abjure their faith or to be sent instantly to the galleys; they were guilty of endeavoring to quit the kingdom against

the King's ordinance. Then began a weary pilgrimage on foot, handcuffed together, "confined every evening in such loathsome prisons as shocked even us, although by this time familiarised to distress." On reaching Tournay they were thrown into a dungeon and kept there many weeks, "laying continually upon an old pallet quite rotten and swarming with vermin, placed near a door, through a hole in which our daily allowance of bread was thrown." They remained six weeks in this situation, when they were joined in prison by two friends,—alleged Huguenots but less resolute than Marteilhe in their belief, for they presently went over and embraced the Catholic religion. Marteilhe sturdily resisted all attempts at conversion, although all were continually importuned by the priests; yet nevertheless entertained hopes of release, which were never realised. They passed on from gaol to gaol until at last they reached Dunkirk, at that time a French port and the home port of six war galleys. On their arrival they were at once separated and each committed to a different ship. Marteilhe's was the *Heureuse*, where he took his place upon the bench, which was to be his terrible abode for many years.

The description given by our author of the system in force at the galleys and of the galleys themselves may be quoted here at some length:

"A galley is ordinarily a hundred and fifty feet long and fifty feet broad. It consists of but one deck, which covers the hold. This hold is in the middle, seven feet high, but at the sides of the galley only six feet. By this we may see that the deck rises about a foot in the centre, and slopes towards the edges to let the water run off more easily; for when a galley is loaded it seems to swim under water, at least the sea constantly washes the deck. The sea would then necessarily enter the hold by the apertures where the masts are placed, were it not prevented by what is called the *coursier*. This is a long case of boards fixed on the middle or highest part of the deck and running from one end of the galley to the other. There is also a hatchway into the hold as high as the *coursier*. From this superficial description perhaps it may be imagined that the slaves and the rest of the crew have their feet always in water. But the case is otherwise; for to each bench there is a board raised a foot from the deck, which serves as a footstool to the rowers, under which the water passes. For the soldiers and mariners there is, running on each side, along the gunnel of the vessel, what is called the *bande*, which is a bench of about the same height with the *coursier*, and two

feet broad. They never lie here, but each leans on his own particular bundle of clothes in a very incommodious posture. The officers themselves are not better accommodated; for the chambers in the hold are designed only to hold the provisions and naval stores of the galley.

“The hold is divided in six apartments. The first of these in importance is the *gavon*. This is a little chamber in the poop, which is big enough only to hold the captain’s bed. The second is the *escandolat*, where the captain’s provisions are kept and dressed. The third is the *compagne*. This contains the beer, wine, oil, vinegar and fresh water of the whole crew, together with their bacon, salt meat, fish and cheese; they never use butter. The fourth, the *paillot*. Here are kept the dried provisions, as biscuits, pease, rice, etc. The fifth is called the *tavern*. This apartment is in the middle of the galley. It contains the wine, which is retailed by the comite, and of which he enjoys the profits. This opens into the powder room, of which the gunner alone keeps the key. In this chamber also the sails and tents are kept. The sixth and last apartment is called the *steerage*, where the cordage and the surgeon’s chest are kept. It serves also during a voyage as a hospital for the sick and wounded, who, however, have no other bed to lie on than ropes. In winter, when the galley is laid up, the sick are sent to a hospital in the city.

“A galley has fifty benches for rowers, that is to say, twenty-five on each side. Each bench is ten feet long. One end is fixed in the *coursier*, the other in the *bande*. They are each half a foot thick and are placed four feet from each other. They are covered with sack-cloth stuffed with flocks, and over this is thrown a cowhide, which reaching down to the *banquet*, or footstool, gives them the resemblance of large trunks. To these the slaves are chained, six to a bench. Along the *bande* runs a large rim of timber, about a foot thick, which forms the gunnel of the galley. To this, which is called the *apostie*, the oars are fixed. These are fifty feet long, and are balanced upon the aforementioned piece of timber; so that the thirteen feet of oar which comes into the galley is equal in weight to the thirty-seven which go into the water. As it would be impossible to hold them in the hand because of their thickness they have handles by which they are managed by the slaves.”

The writer passes on to the method of rowing a galley and says: “The comite, who is the master of the crew of slaves and the tyrant so much

dreaded by the wretches fated to this misery, stands always at the stern, near the captain, to receive his orders. There are two lieutenants also, one in the middle, the other near the prow. These, each with a whip of cords which they exercise without mercy on the naked bodies of the slaves, are always attentive to the orders of the comite. When the captain gives the word for rowing the comite gives the signal with a silver whistle which hangs from his neck. This is repeated by the lieutenants, upon which the slaves, who have their oars in readiness, strike all at once and beat time so exactly, that the hundred and fifty oars seem to give but one blow. Thus they continue, without requiring further orders, till by another signal of the whistle they desist in a moment. There is an absolute necessity for all rowing thus together; for should one of the oars be lifted up or let fall too soon, those in the next bench forward, leaning back, necessarily strike the oar behind them with the hinder part of their heads, while the slaves of this bench do the same by those behind them. It were well if a few bruises on the head were the only punishment. The comite exercises the whip on this occasion like a fury, while the muscles, all in convulsion under the lash, pour streams of blood down the seats; which how dreadful soever it may seem to the reader, custom teaches the sufferers to bear without murmuring.

“The labor of a galley slave has become a proverb; nor is it without reason that this may be reckoned the greatest fatigue that can be inflicted on wretchedness. Imagine six men, naked as when born, chained to their seats, sitting with one foot on a block of timber fixed to the footstool or stretcher, the other lifted up against the bench before them, holding in their hands an oar of enormous size. Imagine them stretching their bodies, their arms outreached to push the oar over the backs of those before them, who are also themselves in a similar attitude. Having thus advanced their oar, they raise that end which they hold in their hands, to plunge the opposite end, or blade, in the sea, which done, they throw themselves back on their benches for the stroke. None, in short, but those who have seen them labor, can conceive how much they endure. None but such could be persuaded that human strength could sustain the fatigue which they undergo for an hour without resting. But what cannot necessity and cruelty make men do? Almost impossibilities. Certain it is that a galley can be navigated in no other manner but by a crew of slaves, over whom a comite may exercise the most unbounded authority. No free man could continue at the oar an hour

unwearied; yet a slave must sometimes lengthen out his toil for ten, twelve, nay, for twenty hours without the smallest intermission. On these occasions, the comite, or one of the other mariners, puts into the mouths of those wretches a bit of bread steeped in wine, to prevent fainting through excess of fatigue or hunger, while their hands are employed upon the oar. At such times are heard nothing but horrid blasphemies, loud bursts of despair, or ejaculations to heaven; all the slaves are streaming with blood, while their unpitying taskmasters mix oaths and threats and the smacking of whips, to fill up this dreadful harmony. At this time the captain roars to the comite to redouble his blows, and when anyone drops from his oar in a swoon, which not infrequently happens, he is whipped while any remains of life appear, and then thrown into the sea without further ceremony."

Marteilhe fell to a galley commanded by a comite, commonly reputed of cruel character and said to be "merciless as a demon." Yet the young Protestant, who was of fine muscular physique, found favor with this severe master, who ordered him to be chained to the bench under his immediate charge. Quoting still further from his "Memoirs,"—he writes: "It may not be unnecessary to mention that the comite eats upon a table raised over one of the seats, by four iron feet. This table also serves him for a bed, and when he chooses to sleep, it is covered with a large pavilion made of cotton. The six slaves of that bench sit under the table, which can easily be taken away when it interferes with the working of the vessel. These six slaves serve as domestics to the comite. Each has his particular employ; and whenever the comite eats or sits here, all the slaves of this bench and the benches next it are uncovered out of respect. Everyone is ambitious of being either on the comite's bench or on one of the lieutenants' benches; not only because they have what is left of the provisions of his table, but also because they are never whipped while at work. Those are called the 'respectable benches;' and being placed in one of them is looked upon as being in a petty office. I was, as already mentioned, placed in this bench, which however I did not long keep; for still retaining some of the pride of this world, I could not prevail upon myself to behave with that degree of abject submission which was necessary to my being in favor. While the comite was at meals, I generally faced another way, and, with my cap on, pretended to take no notice of what was passing behind me. The slaves frequently said that such behavior would be punished, but I disregarded

their admonition, thinking it sufficiently opprobrious to be the slave of the King, without being also the slave of his meanest vassal. I had by this means like to have fallen into the displeasure of the comite, which is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall a galley slave. He inquired whether I partook of those provisions he usually left, and upon being told that I refused to touch a bit, said 'Give him his own way, for the present; a few years' servitude will divest him of this delicacy.'

"One evening the comite called me to his pavilion, and accosting me with more than usual gentleness, unheard by the rest, he let me understand that he perceived I was born of a rank superior to the rest of his crew, which rather increased than diminished his esteem; but, as by indulging my disrespectful behavior the rest might take example, he found it necessary to transfer me to another bench. However I might rest assured of never receiving a blow from him or his inferior officers upon any occasion whatsoever. I testified my gratitude in the best manner I was able; and from that time he kept his promise, which was something extraordinary in one who usually seemed divested of every principle of humanity. Never was man more severe to the slaves in general than he, yet he preserved a moderation towards the Huguenots of his galley, which argued a regard for virtue, not usually found among the lower classes of people."

Constant labor at the oar was terrible enough, but its horrors were accentuated when the galley went into action. Marteilhe was engaged in several sea-fights, one of the fiercest being an engagement with an English warship convoying a fleet of merchantmen to the Thames. "Of the two galleys ordered to attack the frigate," says he, "ours alone was in a position to begin the engagement, as our consort had fallen back at least a league behind us; either because she did not sail so fast as we, or else her captain chose to let us have the honor of striking the first blow. Our commodore, who seemed in no way disturbed at the approach of the frigate, thought our galley alone would be more than a match for the Englishman; but the sequel will show that he was somewhat mistaken in this conjecture.

"As we both mutually approached each other, we were soon within cannon shot, and accordingly the galley discharged her broadside. The frigate, silent as death, approached us without firing a gun, but seemed steadily resolved to reserve all her terrors for a closer engagement. Our commodore,

nevertheless, mistook English resolution for cowardice. ‘What,’ cried he, ‘is the frigate weary of carrying English colors? And does she come to surrender without a blow?’ The boast was premature. Still we approached each other and were now within musket shot. The galley incessantly poured in her broadside and small arm fire, the frigate, all this while, preserving the most dreadful tranquillity that imagination can conceive. At last the Englishman seemed all at once struck with a panic, and began to fly for it. Nothing gives more spirits than a flying enemy, and nothing was heard but the boasting among our officers. ‘We could at one blast sink a man of war; aye, that we could and with ease, too!’ ‘If Mr. English does not strike in two minutes, down he goes, down to the bottom!’ All this time the frigate was in silence, preparing for the tragedy which was to ensue. Her flight was but pretended, and done with a view to entice us to board her astern, which, being the weakest quarter of a man-of-war, galleys generally choose to attack. Against this quarter they endeavor to drive their beak, and then generally board the enemy, after having cleared the decks with their five pieces of cannon. The commodore, in such a favorable conjuncture as he imagined this to be, ordered the galley to board and the men at the helm to bury her beak in the frigate if possible. All the soldiers and sailors stood ready with their sabres and battle-axes to execute his command. The frigate, who perceived our intention, dexterously avoided our beak, which was just ready to be dashed against her stern, so that instead of seeing the frigate sink in the dreadful encounter as was expected, we had the mortification of beholding her fairly alongside of us,—an interview which struck us with terror. Now it was that the English captain’s courage was conspicuous. As he had foreseen what would happen, he was ready with his grappling irons and fixed us fast by his side. His artillery began to open, charged with grape-shot. All on board the galley were as much exposed as if upon a raft. Not a gun was fired that did not make horrible execution; we were near enough even to be scorched with the flame. The English masts were filled with sailors, who threw hand-grenades among us like hail, that scattered wounds and death wherever they fell. Our crew no longer thought of attacking; they were even unable to make the least defence. The terror was so great, as well among the officers as common men, that they seemed incapable of resistance. Those who were neither killed nor wounded lay flat and counterfeited death to find safety. The enemy perceiving our fright, to add to our misfortunes, threw in forty or fifty men, who, sword in hand,

hewed down all that ventured to oppose, sparing however the slaves who made no resistance. After they had cut away thus for some time, being constrained by our still surviving numbers, they continued to pour an infernal fire upon us.

“The galley which had lain astern was soon up with us, and the other four who had almost taken possession of the merchantmen, upon seeing our signal and perceiving our distress, quitted the intended prey to come to our assistance. Thus the whole fleet of merchant ships saved themselves in the Thames. The galleys rowed with such swiftness that in less than half an hour the whole six had encompassed the frigate. Her men were now no longer able to keep the deck, and she presented a favorable opportunity for being boarded. Twenty-five grenadiers from each galley were ordered upon this service. They met with no opposition in coming on; but scarce were they crowded upon the deck when they were saluted once again *à l’Anglais*. The officers of the frigate were entrenched in the forecastle, and fired upon the grenadiers incessantly. The rest of the crew also did what execution they were able through the gratings, and at last cleared the ship of the enemy. Another detachment was ordered to board, but with the same success; however it was at last thought advisable, with hatchets and other proper instruments, to lay open her decks and by that means to make the crew prisoners of war. This was, though with extreme difficulty, executed; and in spite of their firing, which killed several of the assailants, the frigate’s crew was at last constrained to surrender.”

Marteilhe was seriously wounded in this fight, and he graphically details his sufferings as he lay there still chained to the bench, the only survivor of his six companions at the oar. He says: “I had not been long in this attitude when I perceived somewhat moist and cold run down my body. I put my hand to the place and found it wet; but as it was dark I was unable to distinguish what it was. I suspected it, however, to be blood, flowing from some wound, and following with my hand the course of the stream, I found my shoulder near the clavicle was pierced quite through. I now felt another gash in my left leg below the knee, which also went through; again another, made I suppose by a splinter, which ripped the integuments of my belly, the wound being a foot long and four inches wide. I lost a great quantity of blood before I could have any assistance. All near me were dead, as well those before and behind me, and those of my own seat. Of eighteen persons

on the three seats, there was left surviving only myself, wounded as I was in three different places, and all by the explosion of one cannon only. But if we consider the manner of charging with grape-shot our wonder at such prodigious slaughter will cease. After the cartouche of powder, a long tin box filled with musket balls is rammed in. When the piece is fired the box breaks and scatters its contents most surprisingly.

"I was now forced to wait till the battle was ended before I could expect any relief. All on board were in the utmost confusion; the dead, the dying and the wounded, lying upon each other, made a frightful scene. Groans from those who desired to be freed from the dead, blasphemies from the slaves who were wounded unto death, arraigning heaven for making their end not less unhappy than their lives had been. The *coursier* could not be passed for the dead bodies which lay on it. The seats were filled, not only with slaves, but also with sailors and officers who were wounded or slain. Such was the carnage that the living hardly found room to throw the dead into the sea, or succor the wounded. Add to all this the obscurity of the night, and where could misery have been found to equal mine!

"The wounded were thrown indiscriminately into the hold,—petty officers, sailors, soldiers and slaves; there was no distinction of places, no bed to lie upon, nor any succor to be had. With respect to myself, I continued three days in this miserable situation. The blood coming from my wounds was stopped by a little spirit of wine, but there was no bandage tied, nor did the surgeon once come to examine whether I was dead or alive. In this suffocating hole, the wounded, who might otherwise have survived, died in great numbers. The heat and the stench were intolerable, so that the slightest sore seemed to mortify; while those who had lost limbs or received large wounds went off by universal putrefaction.

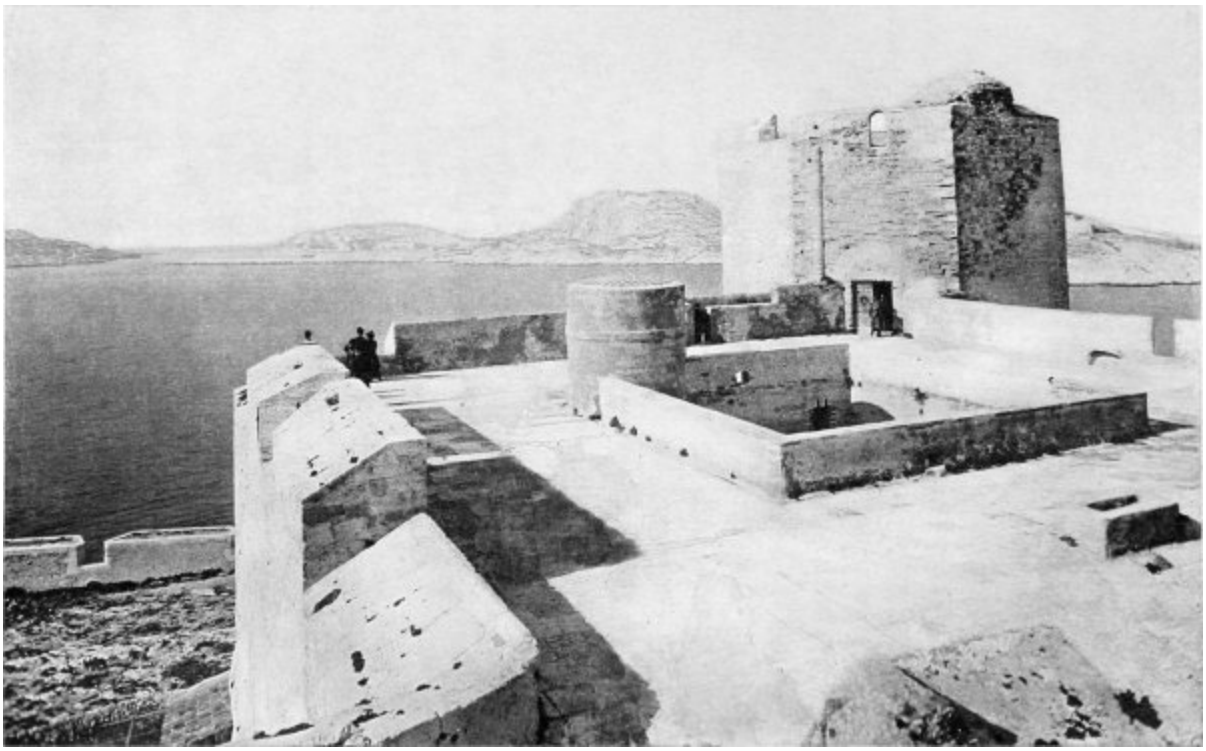
"In this deplorable situation we at last arrived at Dunkirk, where the wounded were put on shore in order to be carried to the marine hospital. We were drawn up from the hold by pulleys and carried to the hospital on men's shoulders. The slaves were consigned to two large apartments separate from the men who were free, forty beds in each room. Every slave was chained by the leg to the foot of his bed. We were visited once every day by the surgeon-major of the hospital, accompanied by all the army and navy surgeons then in port."

Better fortune came to Marteilhe when he recovered. He was appointed clerk to the captain of the galley, being maimed by his wounds and no longer fit for the oar.

“Behold me now,” he writes, “placed in a more exalted station, not less than the captain’s clerk, forsooth. As I knew my master loved cleanliness, I purchased a short coat of red stuff (galley-slaves must wear no other color) tolerably fine. I was permitted to let my hair grow. I bought a scarlet cap, and in this trim presented myself before the captain, who was greatly pleased with my appearance. He gave his *maître d’hôtel* orders to carry me every day a plate of meat from his own table and to furnish me with a bottle of wine, luxuries to which I had long been a stranger. I was never more chained and only wore a ring about my leg in token of slavery. I lay upon a good bed. I had nothing fatiguing to do, even at times when all the rest of the crew were lashed to the most violent exertion. I was loved and respected by the officers and the rest of the crew, cherished by my master and by his nephew, the major of the galleys. In short, I wanted nothing but liberty to increase the happiness I then enjoyed. In this state, if not of pleasure at least of tranquillity, I continued from the year 1709 to 1712, in which it pleased heaven to afflict me with trials more severe than even those I had already experienced.”

England acquired Dunkirk by special treaty with France in 1712. Upon the transfer the English troops entered the city and took possession of the citadel. The French galleys were to remain in port until the fortifications were demolished, and it was agreed that no vessel should leave Dunkirk without permission from Her Britannic Majesty. The galley-slaves remained on board their ships, but by some strange oversight it was not stipulated that the Protestant prisoners, with whose sad condition the English fully sympathised, should be released. The French government was still determined to retain them, and planned to carry them off secretly into France before any demand could be made for their release. In the dead of night they were embarked to the number of twenty-two on board a fishing boat and taken by water to Calais, where they were landed to make the long journey on foot, chained together, to Havre-de-Grace. Here they were held close prisoners in the Arsenal, but fairly well treated. After some weeks, orders came for their removal to Rouen, en route for Paris and eventually to Marseilles. Through the kindness of their co-religionists, who came

charitably to their aid, they were provided with wagons for the journey in which all were carried to the capital, where on arrival they were lodged in the ancient castle of Tournelle, formerly a pleasure house belonging to the royal family, but by now converted into a prison for galley-slaves. It is thus described by Marteilhe: “This prison, or rather cavern, is round and of vast extent. The floor is made uneven by large oak beams, which are placed at three feet distance from each other. These beams are two feet and a half thick, and ranged along the floors in such a manner that at first sight they might be taken for benches, were they not designed for a much more disagreeable purpose. To these were fastened large iron chains, a foot and a half long, at intervals of two feet from each other. At the end of each chain is a large ring of the same metal. When the slave is first brought into this prison, he is made to lie along the beam till his head touches it. Then the ring is put round his neck and fastened by a hammer and anvil kept for the purpose. As the chains are fixed in the beam at two feet distance from each other, and some of the beams are forty feet long, sometimes twenty men are thus chained down in a row and so in proportion to the length of the beams. In this manner are fastened five hundred wretches in an attitude certainly pitiful enough to melt the hardest heart.



Château D'If

Fortress on a small island two miles southwest of Marseilles: one of the scenes of Dumas's novel "Count of Monte Cristo," and the place of captivity of several celebrated persons, among them Mirabeau and Philippe Égalité.

"We remained here (in the Tournelle) but a month, at the expiration of which time we set out with the rest of the slaves for Marseilles. On the tenth of December, at nine in the morning, we left our dismal abode and were conducted into a spacious court of the castle. We were chained by the neck, two and two together, with a heavy chain three feet long, in the middle of which was fixed a ring. After being thus paired, we were placed in ranks, couple before couple, and a long and weighty chain passed through the rings, by which means we were all fastened together. This 'chain,' which consisted of more than four hundred slaves, made a strange appearance. Once more a Protestant friend interposed and purchased the captain's consent to allow them to provide wagons on the road for those unable to

walk. But the trials endured by the majority of these wretched wayfarers were terribly severe. We entered Charenton at six in the evening by moonlight. It froze excessively hard, but the weight of our chains, according to the captain's calculation, being a hundred and fifty pounds upon every man, with the swiftness of our pace, had kept us pretty warm, and we were all actually in a sweat when we entered Charenton. Here we were lodged in the stable of an inn, but chained so close to the manger, that we could neither sit nor lie at our ease. Beside, we had no bed but the dung and the litter of horses to repose on; for as the captain conducted the train to Marseilles at his own expense, where he received twenty crowns for every one that survived the journey, he was as saving as possible and refused us bedding, nor was any allowed the whole way. Here, however, we were suffered to repose, if it might be called repose, till nine at night, when we were to undergo another piece of cruelty, which almost disgraces humanity.

"At nine o'clock, while it yet froze excessively hard, our chains were again unriveted and we were all led from the stable into a court surrounded by high walls. The whole train, which was ranked at one end of the court, was commanded to strip off all clothes and lay them down each before him. The whip was exercised unmercifully on those who were lazy or presumed to disobey. Every one promiscuously, as well we as others, was obliged to comply with this unnecessary command. After we were thus stripped, naked as when born, the whole train was again commanded to march from the side of the court in which they were to the side opposite them. Here were we for two hours, stark naked, exposed to all the inclemency of the weather and a cutting wind that blew from the north. All this time the archers were rummaging our rags under pretence of searching for knives, files or other instruments that might be employed in effecting our escape; but in reality money was that for which they sought so earnestly. They took away everything that was worth taking,—handkerchiefs, shirts, snuff-boxes, scissors,—and never returned anything they laid hands on. When any slave entreated to have his goods restored, he was only answered by blows and menaces, which effectually silenced if not satisfied the querist. This rummage being over, all were ordered to march back to the place from whence we came, and take again each his respective bundle of clothes. But it was impossible. We were almost frozen to death, and so stiff with cold that scarce one in the whole train could move. And though the distance was

but small, yet frozen like statues, every wretch remained where he was and silently awaited fresh instances of their keeper's cruelty. But they did not long wait; the whip again was handled and by the merciless fury of these strangers to pity, the bodies of the poor wretches were mangled without distinction; but all in vain, for this could not supply vital warmth where life was no more. Some actually dead, others dying, were dragged along by the neck and thrown into the stable, without further ceremony, to take their fate. And thus died that night or the ensuing morning, eighteen persons. With respect to our little society, we were neither beaten nor thus dragged along and we may well attribute the saving of our lives to the hundred crowns which had been advanced before our setting out."

Further details of this cruel march may be spared the reader. "In this manner," says Marteilhe, "we crossed the Isle of France, Burgundy and the Mâconnais, till we came to Lyons, marching every day three or four leagues; long stages, considering the weight of our chains, our being obliged to sleep every night in stables upon dung, our having bad provisions and not sufficient liquid to dilute them, walking all day mid-leg in mud, and frequently wet through with rain; swarming with vermin and ulcerated with the itch, the almost inseparable attendants on misery." At Lyons the whole train embarked in large flat-bottomed boats and dropped down the Rhone as far as the bridge St. Esprit; thence by land to Avignon and from Avignon to Marseilles, which they reached on the 17th of January, 1713, having spent some six weeks on the road.

The treatment accorded to the galley-slaves at Marseilles was identical with that of Dunkirk. But now the case of the Protestants engaged the serious attention of the Northern nations, and strong representations were made to the French king, demanding their release. But now in the vain hope of retaining them, the most pertinacious efforts were made to obtain that abjuration of the faith which had been steadfastly rejected by the sufferers for so many years. Bigoted priests with special powers of persuasion were called in with fresh zeal for proselytising, but being entirely unsuccessful they concentrated their efforts to impede and prolong the negotiations for release. When at last the order came, due to the vigorous interposition of the Queen of England, it was limited to a portion only of the Protestant prisoners. One hundred and thirty-six were released, and among them Jean Marteilhe; but the balance were retained quite another year. Marteilhe, after

a short stay at Geneva, travelled northwards, and at length went with some of his comrades to England. They were granted a special audience with Queen Anne, and were permitted to kiss her Majesty's hand, and were assured from her own mouth of the satisfaction afforded by their deliverance.

A few details may be extracted from Marteilhe's story as to the dress, diet, occupation and general discipline of one of Louis' galleys. As to dress he tells us:

"Each slave receives every year linen shirts, somewhat finer than that of which sails are made; two pair of knee trousers, which are made without any division, like a woman's petticoat,—for they must be put on over the head because of the chain; one pair of stockings made of coarse red stuff, but no shoes. However, when the slaves are employed in the business of the galley by land, as frequently happens in winter, the keeper on that occasion furnishes them with shoes, which he takes back when the slaves return aboard. They are supplied every second year with a cassock of coarse red stuff. The tailor shows no great marks of an artist in making it up; it is only a piece of stuff doubled, one half for the forepart, the other for the back; at the top a hole to put the head through. It is sewed up on each side, and has two little sleeves which descend to the elbow. This cassock has something the shape of what is called in Holland a 'keil,' which carters generally wear over the rest of their clothes. The habit of the former is, however, not so long, for it reaches before only down to the knees, and behind it falls half a foot lower. Besides all this, they are allowed every year a red cap, very short, as it must not cover the ears. Lastly they are given every second year a great coat of coarse cloth made of wool and hair. This habit is made in the form of a nightgown and descends to the feet; it is furnished with a hood not unlike the cowl of a Capuchin friar. This is by far the best part of a slave's scanty wardrobe; for it serves him for mattress and blankets at night, and keeps him warm by day."

As will have been gathered from the preceding description, the galleys were mainly intended for sea service and occasional combat, but this was only in the summer months. As winter approached, generally about the latter end of October, the galleys were laid up in harbor and disarmed. "The first precaution is to land the gunpowder, for they never bring their powder into

port. The galleys are next brought in and ranged along the quay according to the order of precedence, with the stern next the quay. There are then boards laid, called *planches*, to serve as a passage from the quay to the galley. The masts are taken down and laid in the *coursier*, and the yards lie all along the seats. After this they take out the cannon, the warlike stores, provisions, sails, cordage, anchors, etc. The sailors and coasting pilots are discharged, and the rest of the crew lodged in places appointed for them in the city of Dunkirk. Here the principal officers have their pavilions, though they lodge in them but seldom, the greatest part spending the winter at Paris or at their own homes. The galley being at last entirely cleared, the slaves find room enough to fix their wretched quarters for the winter. The company belonging to each seat procure pieces of boards, which they lay across the seats and upon these make their beds. The only bed between them and the boards is a cast-off greatcoat; their only covering that which they wear during the day. The first rower of each seat, who has consequently the first choice, is best lodged; the second shares the next best place; the four others are lodged, each, on the cross planks already mentioned, according to his order.

“When the weather grows extremely cold, there are two tents raised over the galley, one above the other. The outermost is generally made of the same stuff of which the slaves’ greatcoats are formed, and keeps the galley sufficiently warm; I mean it seems warm to those who are accustomed to this hard way of living. For those who have been used to their own houses and warm fires would never be able to support the cold without being habituated to it beforehand. A little fire to warm them and a blanket to cover them would make our slaves extremely happy, but this is a happiness never allowed them on board. At break of day the comites, who always sleep on board together with the keepers and halberdiers, blow their whistles, at the sound of which all must rise. This is always done precisely at the same hour; for the commodore every evening gives the signal to the comite by firing a cannon for the slaves to go to sleep, and repeats the same at break of day for their getting up. If in the morning any should be lazy and not rise when they hear the whistle, they may depend on being lashed severely. The crew being risen, their first care is to fold up their beds, to put the seats in order, to sweep between them and wash them when necessary. The sides of the tent are raised up by stanchions provided for that purpose in order to air

the galley; though when the wind blows hard, that side to the leeward only is raised. When this is done every slave sits down on his own seat and does something to earn himself a little money.

“It is necessary to be known, that no slave must be idle. The comites, who observe their employments every day, come up to those they see unemployed and ask why they do not work. If it is answered that they understand no trade, he gives them cotton yarn, and bids them knit it into stockings; and if the slave knows not how to knit, the comite appoints one of his companions of the same seat to instruct him. It is a trade easily learnt; but as there are some who are either lazy, stupid or stubborn and will not learn, they are sure to be remarked by the comites who seldom show them any future favor. If they will not work at that for their own advantage, the comite generally gives them some work impossible to perform; and when they have labored in vain to execute his commands, he whips them for laziness; so that in their own defence, they are at last obliged to learn to knit.

“Whenever a slave is missing, there are guns fired one after the other, which advertise his escape to the peasants round the country; upon which they all rise, and with hounds trained for the purpose trace out his footsteps; so that it is almost impossible for him to secure a retreat. I have seen several instances of this at Marseilles. At Dunkirk, indeed, the Flemish detest such practices; but the soldiers, with which the town abounds, will do anything to gain twenty crowns. At Marseilles the peasants are cruel to the last degree. I have been informed for certain that a son brought back his own father, who had been a slave and endeavored to escape. The intendant, as the story goes, was so shocked at his undutifulness, that though he ordered him the twenty crowns for his fee, yet sentenced him to the galleys for life, where he remained chained to the same seat with his unhappy father. So true is it, that the natives of Provence are in general perfidious, cruel and inhuman.

“All along the quay, where the galleys lie, are ranged little stalls, with three or four slaves in each, exercising their trades to gain a trifling subsistence. Their trades are nevertheless frequently little better than gross impositions on the credulity of the vulgar. Some pretend to tell fortunes and take horoscopes; others profess magic and undertake to find stolen goods,

though cunning often helps them out when the devil is not so obedient as to come at a call.

“While some of the slaves are thus employed in the stalls along the quay, the major part are chained to their seats aboard, some few excepted who pay a halfpenny a day for being left without a chain. Those can walk about the galley and traffic or do any other business which may procure them a wretched means of subsistence. The greatest part of them are sutlers. They sell tobacco (for in winter the slaves are permitted to smoke on board), brandy, etc. Others make over their seats a little shop, where they expose for sale butter, cheese, vinegar, boiled tripe, all of which are sold to the crew at reasonable rates. A halfpenny worth of these, with the king’s allowance of bread, make no uncomfortable meal. Except these sutlers, all the rest are chained to their seats and employed in knitting stockings. Perhaps it may be asked where the slaves find spun cotton for knitting. I answer thus:

“Many of the Turks, especially those who have money, drive a trade in this commodity with the merchants of Marseilles, who deal largely in stockings. The merchants give the Turks what cotton they think proper, unmanufactured, and the Turks pay them in this commodity manufactured into stockings. These Turks deliver the cotton spun to the slaves, to be knit. They are indifferent as to the size of the stockings, as the slave is paid for knitting at so much a pound. So that the slave who received ten pounds of spun cotton is obliged to return the same weight of knit stockings, for which he is paid at a fixed price. There must be great care taken not to filch any of the cotton nor leave the stockings on a damp place to increase their weight; for if such practices are detected the slave is sure to undergo the bastinado.

“At the approach of summer their employments are multiplied every day by new fatigues. All the ballast, which is composed of little stones about the size of pigeon’s eggs, is taken out and handed up from the hold in little wicker baskets from one to the other, till they are heaped upon the quay opposite the galley. Here two men are to pump water upon them till they become as clean as possible; and when dry they are again replaced. This, and cleaning the vessel, takes up seven or eight days’ hard labor. Then the galley must be put into proper order before it puts to sea. First, necessary precautions must be taken with respect to the cordage that it be strong and

supple; and what new cordage may be necessary is to be supplied by the slaves by passing it round the galley. This takes up some days to effect. Next the sails are to be visited, and if new ones are necessary, the comite cuts them out and the slaves sew them. They must also make new tents, mend the old in like manner, prepare the officers' beds, and everything else, which it would be impossible to particularise. This bustle continues till the beginning of April, when the Court sends orders for putting to sea.

"Our armament begins by careening the galleys. This is done by turning one galley upon another so that its keel is quite out of the water. The whole keel is then rubbed with rendered tallow. This is perhaps one of the most fatiguing parts of a slave's employments. After this the galley is fitted up with her masts and rigging and supplied with artillery and ammunition. All this is performed by the slaves, who are sometimes so fatigued that the commander is obliged to wait in port a few days till the crew have time to refresh themselves."

Galleys as warships fell into disuse about the time that our Protestant prisoners were released. The improvement in the sailing qualities of ships and the manifest advantages enjoyed by those skilfully handled, as were the English, gradually brought about the abandonment of the oar as a motive power, and the galleys are only remembered now as a glaring instance of the cruelties practised by rulers upon helpless creatures subjected to their tender mercies.

CHAPTER X
THE DAWN OF REVOLUTION

State of France—Bad harvests—Universal famine—Chronic disturbances—Crime prevalent—Cartouche—His organized gang—His capture, sentence and execution—Pamphleteers and libelists in the Bastile—Lenglet-Dufresnoy—Roy—Voltaire—His first consignment to the Bastile—His release and departure for London—Cellamare-Alberoni conspiracy—Mlle. De Launay, afterwards Madame de Staal—Remarkable escapes—Latude and Allégre.

Dark clouds hovered over France in the latter years of the reign of Louis XIV: an empty exchequer drained by the cost of a protracted and disastrous war; the exodus of many thousands of the most industrious producers of wealth, flying from religious intolerance; a succession of bad harvests, causing universal famine and chronic disturbance. The people rose against the new edicts increasing taxes upon salt, upon tobacco and on stamped paper, and were repressed with harshness, shot down, thrown into prison or hanged. The genuine distress in the country was terrible. Thousands of deaths from starvation occurred. Hordes of wretched creatures wandered like wild beasts through the forest of Orleans. A Jesuit priest wrote from Onzain that he preached to four or five skeletons, who barely existed on raw thistles, snails and the putrid remains of dead animals. In the Vendomois, the heather was made into bread with an intermixture of sawdust, and soup was made with roots and the sap of trees. Touraine, once the very garden of France, had become a wilderness. The hungry fought for a morsel of horse flesh, torn from some wretched beast which had died a natural death. Four-fifths of the inhabitants of the villages had become public beggars. In one village of four hundred houses, the population had been reduced to three persons.

Never in the history of France had robberies been so numerous or so varied in character as during this period. Paris was filled with the worst criminals and desperadoes. The provinces were overrun with them. The whole country was ravaged and terrorised. Prominent among this dangerous fraternity, whose name was legion, is one name, that of Cartouche, the most noted evil doer of his or indeed any time. Others might have excelled him in

originality, intelligence and daring. That which gave him especial distinction was his power of organisation, his nice choice of associates and the far-reaching extent of his nefarious plans. The devoted and obedient band he directed was recruited from all sources, and included numbers of outwardly respectable persons even drawn from the police and the French guards. He had agents at his disposal for all branches of his business; he had spies, his active assistants to deal the blows, his receivers, his locksmiths, his publicans with ready shelter and asylums of retreat. The forces controlled by Cartouche were extraordinarily numerous, and the total was said to exceed a couple of thousand persons of both sexes.

Paris was dismayed and indignant when the operations grew and increased, and the police proved less able to check them. In the last months of 1719 and during 1720, widespread terror prevailed. The thieves worked their will even in daylight. After dark the city belonged to them. The richest quarters were parcelled out among the various gangs, which broke into every house and summoned every wayfarer to stand and deliver. As a specimen of their proceedings,—a party visited the mansion, once the Hotel of the Maréchal de France and now occupied by the Spanish Ambassador, entered the Ambassador's bedroom at night and rifled it, securing a rich booty—several collars of fine pearls, a brooch adorned with twenty-seven enormous diamonds, a large service of silver plate and the whole of the magnificent wardrobe of the lady of the house. This was only one of hundreds of such outrages, which were greatly encouraged by the diffusion of luxury among the upper classes, while the lower, as we have seen, were plunged in misery and starvation.

This was the epoch of the speculations of the famous adventurer, Law, who established the great Bank of Mississippi, and for the time made the fortunes of all who joined in his schemes and trafficked in his shares. Money was almost a drug; people made so much and made it so fast that it was difficult to spend it. Houses were furnished regardless of expense with gorgeous tapestry, cloth of gold hangings, beds of costly woods encrusted with jewels and ormolu, Venetian glasses in ivory frames, candelabra of rock crystal. All this luxury played into the hands of Cartouche and his followers, who worked on a system, recognising each other by strict signs and helping each other to seize and pass away articles of value from hand to hand along a whole street. Strict order regulated the conduct of the thieves.

Many were forbidden to use unnecessary violence, killing was only permitted in self defence, the same person was never to be robbed twice, and some were entrusted with the password of the band as a safe conduct through a crowd.

Meanwhile the personality of Cartouche was constantly concealed. Some went so far as to declare that he was a myth and did not exist in the flesh. Yet the suspicion grew into certainty that Paris was at the mercy of a dangerous combination, directed by and centred in one astute and capable leader. Thieves taken red-handed had revealed upon the rack the identity of Cartouche and the government was adjured to effect his capture, but without result. So daring did he become that he openly showed himself at carnival time with five of his chief lieutenants and defied arrest.

Cartouche was a popular hero, for he pretended to succor the poor with the booty he took from the rich. He was a species of Parisian Fra Diavolo, and many stories were invented in proof of his generosity, his sense of humor and his kindliness to those in distress. As a matter of fact he was a brutal, black-hearted villain, whose most prominent characteristic was his constant loyalty to his followers, by which he secured their unswerving attachment and by means of it worked with such remarkable success. To this day his name survives as the prototype of a criminal leader, directing the wide operations of a well organised gang of depredators that swept all before them. Their exploits were at times marvellous, both in initiative and execution, and owed everything to Cartouche. One among many stories told of him may be quoted as illustrating his ingenious methods. It was a robbery from the chief officer of the watch, from whom he stole a number of silver forks in broad daylight, and while actually engaged in conversation with his victim. Cartouche arrived at this official's house in his carriage, accompanied by two tall flunkeys in gorgeous livery. He announced himself as an Englishman, and was shown into the dining-room, where dinner was in progress. Cartouche declined to take a seat, but contrived to lead the host to a corner of the room where he regaled him with a fabulous story of how an attack was being organised by Cartouche on his house. The officer quite failed to recognise his visitor, and listened with profound attention. It was not until after Cartouche had left that it was discovered that not a single fork or spoon remained upon his table, the silver having been adroitly abstracted by Cartouche, who passed it unseen to his confederates—the

disguised footmen who had accompanied him. Many similar thefts were committed by Cartouche and his gang, one victim being the Archbishop of Bourges.

Cartouche, by his cleverness in disguise, long escaped capture, and it was not until October 15th, 1721, that he was finally caught and arrested. His capture naturally created an immense sensation in Paris, and became the universal topic of conversation. Cartouche had been traced to a wine shop, where he was found in bed by M. le Blanc, an employé of the War Ministry, who had with him forty picked soldiers and a number of policemen. Orders had been issued to take Cartouche, dead or alive. His capture came about through a patrol soldier who had recognised Cartouche and acted as a spy on his movements. This man had been carried to the Châtelet by Pekom, major of the Guards, and when threatened with the utmost rigor of the law confessed all he knew about the prince of thieves. The prisoner was taken first to the residence of M. le Blanc and afterwards to the Châtelet. It was found necessary to be extremely circumspect with Cartouche on account of his violence, and his cell was closely guarded by four men. Cartouche soon made an attempt to escape in company with a fellow occupant of his cell, who happened to be a mason. Having made a hole in a sewer passage below, they dropped into the water, waded to the end of the gallery and finally reached the cellar of a greengrocer in the neighborhood thence they emerged into the shop, and were on the verge of escape, but the barking of the greengrocer's dog aroused the inmates of the house, who gave the alarm, and four policemen, who happened to be in the neighborhood, came to the rescue. Cartouche was recognised, captured and again imprisoned, being now securely chained by his feet and hands. He was later transferred to the Conciergerie and more closely watched than ever during his trial, which was concluded on November 26th, 1721, when sentence was passed upon him and two accomplices. On the day following, Cartouche was subjected to the torture "extraordinary" by means of the "boot," which he endured without yielding, and refused to make any confession. The scaffold, meanwhile was erected in the Place de Grève where the carpenters put up five wheels and two gibbets. Directly the place of execution became known in Paris, the streets were filled with large crowds of people and windows overlooking the Grève were let at high prices. Apparently the magistrates did not care to gratify the curiosity of the public, and before the

afternoon four of the wheels and one of the gibbets were removed. Towards four o'clock Charles Sanson, the executioner of the Court of Justice, went to the Conciergerie, accompanied by his assistants, and sentence was read to the culprit, who was afterwards handed over to the secular arm. Cartouche had displayed no emotion throughout the trial. He no doubt thought himself a hero, and wished to die amidst the applause of the people who had long feared him. When, however, the cortège started, Cartouche began to grow uneasy and finally his stolid indifference completely gave way. On reaching the Place de Grève he noticed that only one wheel remained, and his agitation became intense. He repeatedly exclaimed, "*Les frollants!*" "*Les frollants!*" (the traitors), thinking his accomplices had been induced to confess, and had betrayed him. Now his stoicism vanished, and he insisted upon being taken back to the Hôtel de Ville to confess his sins. On the following morning great crowds again assembled to witness the execution. The condemned man had lost his bravado, but still displayed strange firmness. His natural instincts appeared when he was placed on the *Croix de St. André*, and the dull thud of the iron bar descending extorted the exclamation "One" from him, as if it was his business to count the number of blows to be inflicted. Although it had been stipulated at the passing of sentence that Cartouche should be strangled after a certain number of strokes, the excitement of the clerk of the Court caused him to withhold the fact from the executioner; and so great was the strength of Cartouche that it required eleven blows to break him on the wheel.

Other executions speedily followed. Scaffold and gibbet were kept busy till 1722, and in the succeeding years five females whom Cartouche had found useful as auxiliaries to his society were put upon their trial, sentenced and executed. Many receivers of stolen goods were also brought to account before the long series of crimes that had defied the police was finally ended.

In these days the prevailing discontent against the ruling authority found voice in the manner so often exhibited by a ground-down and severely repressed people. This was the age of the libellist and the pamphleteer, and the incessant proceedings against them brought in fresh harvests to the Bastile. The class was comprehensive, and its two extremes ranged between a great literary genius such as Voltaire and the petty penny-a-liner, who frequently found a lodging in the State prisons. Of the last named category the most prolific was Gatien Sandras de Courtilz, who produced about a

hundred volumes of satirical, political pamphlets and fictitious histories. Such a man was for ever within four walls or in hiding beyond the frontier. Leniency was wasted on him. Upon a petition to the Chancellor Pontchartrain, an inquiry was instituted into the reasons of his imprisonment with the result that he was released. Within two years he was found again distributing libels, and was again thrown into the Bastile, this time to remain there for ten years.

A curious specimen of this class distinguished himself in the following reign,—a certain Abbé Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy, who was for ever in and out of the Bastile. He is spoken of as a man of wit and learning, an indefatigable worker, a fearless writer, but of very indifferent honesty, venial to the last degree, to be bought at any time and ready for any baseness, even to espionage. Isaac d'Israeli mentions him in his "Curiosities of Literature" and in terms of praise as a man of much erudition with a fluent, caustic pen and daring opinions. He earned a calm contempt for the rubs of evil fortune, and when a fresh arrest was decreed against him, he accepted it with a light heart. He well knew his way to the Bastile. At the sight of the officer, who came to escort him to prison, he would pick up his night-cap and his snuff-box, gather his papers together and take up his quarter in the old familiar cell where he had already done so much good work. He suffered seven distinct imprisonments in the Bastile between 1718 and 1752, and saw also the inside of the prisons of Vincennes, Strasbourg and For-l'Évêque. At his last release he signed the following declaration:

"Being at liberty, I promise, in conformity with the orders of the King, to say nothing of the prisoners or other things concerning the Bastile, which may have come to my knowledge. In addition to this I acknowledge that all my good silver and papers and effects which I brought to the said castle have been restored to me."

Lenglet rendered one important service to the State, the discovery of the Cellamare-Alberoni conspiracy, but he would not proceed in the affair until he had been assured that no lives should be sacrificed. He was a painstaking writer, and kept one manuscript by him for fifty-five years; it was, however, a work on visions and apparitions, and he was a little afraid of publishing it to the world. His end came by a strange accident. He fell into the fire as he

slept over a “modern book” and was burned to death. He was then eighty years of age.

Among the smaller people, scribblers and second rate litterateurs, who were consigned to the Bastile, was Roy, an impudent rascal, who lampooned royalty and royal things, and impertinently attacked the Spanish ambassador. All Paris was moved by his arrest, his papers were sealed and he was treated as of more importance than he deserved. After four months’ detention he was released, and banished from Paris to a distance of ninety leagues. He soon returned and published a defamatory ode on the French generals. General de Moncrieff met Roy in the streets, boxed his ears and kicked him, but although the poet wore his sword he did not defend himself. Roy raged furiously against the Academy which would not elect him a member and wrote a stinging epigram when the Comte de Clermont of the blood royal was chosen. The Comte paid a ruffian to give him a thrashing, which was so severe that the poet, now eighty years of age, succumbed to the punishment.

Another literary prisoner of more pretensions was the Abbé Prevost, author of the well known *Manon Lescaut*, the only work which has survived out of the 170 books he wrote in all. He was a Jesuit, who joined the order of the Benedictines, but fled from their house in St.-Germain-des-Prés, and went about Paris freely. He was arrested by the police and sent back to his monastery. For seven years he remained quiet, but when at length he proposed to publish new works in order “to impose silence upon the malignity of his enemies,” a *lettre de cachet* was issued to commit him to the Bastile. The Prince de Conti came to his help, and gave him money with which he escaped to Brussels.

Voltaire’s first connection with the Bastile was in 1717, when he was only twenty-two years of age, a law student in Paris. He had already attracted attention by his insolent lampoons on the Regent and the government, and had been banished from Paris for writing an epigram styled the *Bourbier*, “the mud heap.” This new offence was a scandalous Latin inscription and some scathing verses which, according to a French writer, would have been punished under Louis XIV with imprisonment for life. He took his arrest very lightly. The officer who escorted him to the Bastile reports: “Arouet (Voltaire) joked a good deal on the road, saying he did not think any

business was done on feast days, that he did not mind going to the Bastile but hoped he would be allowed to continue taking his milk, and that if offered immediate release he would beg to remain a fortnight longer." His detention ran on from week to week into eleven months, which he employed in writing two of his masterpieces, *La Henriade* and *Œdipe*, the latter his first play to have a real success when put upon the stage.

Voltaire, when released, was ordered to reside at Chatenay with his father, who had a country house there, and offered to be responsible for him. The charge was onerous, and the young man was sent to Holland to be attached to the French ambassador, but he soon drifted back to Paris, where he remained in obscurity for seven years. Now he came to the front as the victim of a personal attack by bravos in the pay of the Chevalier de Rohan, by whom he was severely caned. The poet had offended the nobility by his insolent airs. Voltaire appealed for protection, and orders were issued to arrest De Rohan's hirelings if they could be found. The poet sought satisfaction against the moving spirit, and having gone for a time into the country to practise fencing, returned to Paris and challenged the Chevalier, when he met him in the dressing-room of the famous actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur. The duel was arranged, but the De Rohan family interposed and secured Voltaire's committal to the Bastile, when he wrote to the Minister Herault:

"In the deplorable condition in which I find myself I implore your kindness. I have been sent to the Bastile for having pursued with too much haste and ardor the established laws of honor. I was set upon publicly by six persons, and I am punished for the crime of another because I did not wish to hand him over to justice. I beg you to use your credit to obtain leave for me to go to England."

Leave was granted, accompanied with release, and in due course Voltaire arrived in London, where he remained three years. This period tended greatly to develop his mental qualities. "He went a discontented poet, he left England a philosopher, the friend of humanity," says Victor Cousin. He became a leader among the men who, as Macaulay puts it, "with all their faults, moral and intellectual, sincerely and earnestly desired the improvement of the condition of the human race, whose blood boiled at the sight of cruelty and injustice, who made manful war with every faculty they

possessed on what they considered as abuses, and who on many signal occasions placed themselves gallantly between the powerful and the oppressed."

Voltaire was presently permitted to return to Paris. Minister Maurepas wrote him: "You may go to Paris when you like and even reside there.... I am persuaded you will keep a watch upon yourself at Paris, and do nothing calculated to get you into trouble." The warning was futile. Within four years he was once more arrested and lodged in the castle prison of Auxonne, with strict orders that he was never to leave the interior of the castle. His offences were blasphemy and a bitter attack upon the Stuarts. He had, moreover, published his "Lettres Philosophiques," and a new *lettre de cachet* was to be issued, but he was given time and opportunity to make his escape into Germany. The work was, however, burned by the public executioner, and the wretched publisher sent to the Bastile, after the confiscation of all his stock, which meant total ruin. Prison history is not further concerned with Voltaire. His friendship with Frederick the Great, his long retreat in Switzerland and the fierce criticisms and manifestoes he fulminated from Ferney must be sought elsewhere.

Reference has been made in a previous page to the Cellamare-Alberoni conspiracy first detected by Abbé Lenglet, which had for object the removal of the Duc d'Orleans from the Regency and the convocation of the States General, the first organised effort towards more popular government in France. A secondary aim was a coalition of the powers to re-establish the Stuart dynasty in England. Nothing came of the conspiracy, but the arrest of those implicated. Among them were the Duc and Duchesse de Maine. A certain Mdlle. de Launay, who was a waiting woman of the Duchess, staunchly refused to betray her mistress and was imprisoned in the Bastile. Out of this grew a rather romantic love story. The King's lieutenant of the Bastile, a certain M. de Maison Rougé, an old cavalry officer, was greatly attracted by Mdlle. de Launay. "He conceived the greatest attachment that any one ever had for me," she writes in her amusing memoirs. "He was the only man by whom I think I was ever really loved." His devotion led him to grant many privileges to his prisoner, above all in allowing her to open a correspondence with another inmate of the Bastile, the Chevalier de Ménil, —also concerned in the Cellamare conspiracy,—with whom she had a slight acquaintance. M. de Maison Rougé went so far as to allow them to

meet on several occasions, and, much to his chagrin, the pair fell desperately in love with each other. Mdlle. de Launay expected to marry the Chevalier after their release, but on getting out of the Bastile she found herself forgotten. Some fifteen years later she became the wife of Baron de Staal, an ex-officer of the Swiss Guards under the Duc de Maine. She must not be confused, of course, with the Madame de Staël of Napoleon's time.

While some prisoners like Masers Latude—of whom more directly—followed their natural bent in making the most daring and desperate attempts to escape from the Bastile, there were one or two cases in which men showed a strong reluctance to leave it. One of the victims of the Cellamare conspiracy was an ex-cavalry officer, the Marquis de Bonrepas, who had been shut up for four or five years. He found friends abroad who sought to obtain his release. But he received the offer of liberty with a very bad grace, declaring his preference for the prison. He was a veteran soldier, old, poor and without friends, and he was only persuaded to leave the Bastile on the promise of a home at the Invalides with a pension. A doctor of the University, François du Boulay, was sent to the Bastile in 1727 and remained there forty-seven years. Then, when Louis XVI ascended the throne, search was made through the registers for meet subjects for the King's pardon, and Du Boulay was one of those recommended for discharge. He went out and deeply regretted it. He was quite friendless and could find no trace of any member of his family. His house had been pulled down and a public edifice built upon the site. He had been quite happy in the Bastile, and begged that he might return there. His prayer was refused, however, and he withdrew altogether from the world and passed the rest of his days in complete solitude.

The name of Latude, mentioned above, is classed in prison history with those of Baron Trenck, Sack, Shepherd, Casanova and "Punch" Howard as the heroes of the most remarkable prison escapes on record. He is best known as Latude, but he had many aliases,—Jean Henri, Danry, Dawyer, Gedor; and his offence was that of seeking to curry favor with Madame de Pompadour by falsely informing her that her life was in danger. He warned her carefully to avoid opening a box that would reach her through the post, which, in fact, was sent by himself. It enclosed a perfectly harmless white powder. Then having despatched it he went in person and on foot to

Versailles expecting to be handsomely rewarded for saving the life of the King's favorite.

Unfortunately for Latude the innocuous nature of the powder was disbelieved, and the mere possibility of foul play sufficed to raise suspicion. Both Louis XV and his mistress shivered at the very whisper of poison. The police promptly laid hands upon the author of this sorry trick, and he was committed to Vincennes to begin an imprisonment which lasted, with short intervals of freedom after his escapes, for thirty-four years. Latude was well treated and was visited by the King's doctor, as it was thought his mind was deranged. He was, however, keen witted enough to snatch at the first chance of escape. When at exercise in the garden, apparently alone, a dog ran against the door and it fell open. Latude instantly stepped through and got into the open fields, through which he ran for his life, and made his way into Paris, to the house of a friend, one Duval. Thence he wrote a letter to Madame de Pompadour beseeching her forgiveness and imprudently giving his address. The authorities at once laid hands upon him, and after being no more than twenty-four hours at large he was once more imprisoned, this time in the Bastile.

He now found a prison companion with whom his fortunes were to be closely allied, one Allégre, who had been accused of the same crime, that of attempting to poison Madame de Pompadour. Allégre, who in the end died in a lunatic asylum, was a violent, unmanageable and hardly responsible prisoner. He always denied the charges brought against him, as did also Latude. The two joined forces in giving trouble and breaking the prison rules. They were caught in clandestine conversation with others, from floor to floor in the Bazinière Tower, and in passing tobacco to each other. Latude addressed an indignant appeal against his treatment to the authorities, written upon linen with his blood. He complained of his food, demanded fish for breakfast, declaring he could not eat eggs, artichokes or spinach, and would pay out of his own pocket for different food. He became enraged when these requests were refused. When fault was found with his misuse of the linen, he asked for paper and more shirts. He got the former, and began a fresh petition of interminable length and, when the governor grew weary of waiting for it, threw it into the fire.

As the chamber occupied by Latude and Allégre was in the basement and liable to be flooded by the inundation of the Seine, it became necessary to remove them to another. This was more favorable to escape, and to this they now turned their attention with the strange ingenuity and unwearied patience so often displayed by captives. The reason for Latude's demand for more shirts was now explained. For eighteen months they worked unceasingly, unravelling the linen and with the thread manufacturing a rope ladder three hundred feet in length. The rungs were of wood made from the fuel supplied for their fire daily. These articles were carefully concealed under the floor. When all was ready, Latude took stock of their productions. There was 1,400 feet of linen rope and 208 rungs of wood, the rungs encased in stuff from the linings of their dressing gowns, coats and waistcoats to muffle the noise of the ladder as it swung against the wall of the Tower.

The actual escape was effected by climbing up the interior of the chimney of their room, having first dislodged the chimney bars, which they took with them. On reaching the roof, they lowered the ladder and went down it into the ditch, which was fourteen feet deep in water. Notwithstanding this, they attacked the outer wall with their chimney bars of iron, and after eight hours' incessant labor broke an opening through its ponderous thickness and despite the fear of interruption from patrols passing outside with flaming torches. Both fugitives when at large hastened to leave Paris. Allégre got as far as Brussels, whence he wrote an abusive letter to Madame de Pompadour, and at the instance of the French King was taken into custody and lodged in the prison at Lille, thence escorted to the frontier and so back to the Bastile. Latude took refuge, but found no safety, in Amsterdam. His whereabouts was betrayed by letters to his mother which were intercepted. He, too, was reinstalled in the Bastile—after four brief months of liberty.

Latude's leadership in the escapades seems to have been accepted as proved, and he was now more harshly treated than his associate, Allégre. He lay in his cell upon straw in the very lowest depths of the castle, ironed, with no blankets and suffering much from the bitter cold. For three years and more he endured this, and was only removed when the Seine once more overflowed and he was all but drowned in his cell. The severity shown him was to be traced to the trouble his escape had brought upon his gaolers, who were reprimanded, fined and otherwise punished. The only alleviation of his

misery was the permission to remove half his irons, those of his hands or feet.

As the years passed, this harsh treatment was somewhat mitigated, but the effect on Latude was only to make him more defiant and irreconcilable. He found many ways of annoying the authorities. He broke constantly into noisy disturbances. “This prisoner,” it is reported, “has a voice of thunder, which can be heard all through and outside the Bastile. It is impossible for me to repeat his insults as I have too much respect for the persons he mentioned.” Not strangely, his temper was irritable. He swore over his dinner because it was not served with a larded fowl. He was dissatisfied with the clothes provided for him, and resented complying with the rules in force. When a tailor was ordered to make him a dressing-gown, a jacket and breeches, he wished to be measured, whereas, according to the rules of the Bastile, the tailor cut out new clothes on the pattern of the old.

The conduct of Allégre (who was no doubt mad) was worse. He was dangerous and tried to stab his warders. Then he adopted the well known prison trick of “breaking out,” of smashing everything breakable in his cell, all pottery, glass, tearing up his mattress and throwing the pieces out of the window, destroying his shirts, “which cost the King twenty francs apiece,” and his pocket handkerchiefs, which were of cambric. He had nothing on his body but his waistcoat and his breeches. “If he be not mad he plays the madman very well,” writes the governor, and again: “This prisoner would wear out the patience of the most virtuous Capuchin.” The medical opinion on his state was not definite, but he was removed to Charenton, the famous lunatic asylum, and confined there in a new cage.

Fifteen years had passed since his first arrest. Latude continued to forward petitions for his release, and always got the same answer, that the proper moment for it had not yet arrived. But he was once more transferred to Vincennes and again managed to escape. Taking advantage of the evident laxity of supervision he slipped away in a fog. He could not keep quiet but wrote to M. de Sartine, now the Lieutenant of Police, offering terms. If he were paid 30,000 francs for the plans and public papers he had drawn up, he was willing to forget and forgive the cruelties practised upon him. Failing to receive a reply, he went in person to Fontainebleau to press his case upon

the Duc de Choiseul, who forthwith ordered him back into imprisonment. After three weeks of freedom he found himself again inside Vincennes.

As time passed, he also exhibited signs of madness, and was at last also transferred for a time to Charenton, from which he was finally released in 1777. He went out on the 5th of June with orders to reside at Montagnac, and in little more than a month was again in trouble for writing his memoirs a little too openly. He passed through the Little Châtelet and thence to Bicêtre, the semi prison-asylum, and stayed there generally in an underground cell and on the most meagre diet for seven more years, and was then interned once more at Montagnac. The latest official account of him was in Paris, living on a pension of 400 francs a year from the treasury; but a public subscription was got up for him, and after the Revolution, in 1793, the heirs of Madame de Pompadour were sentenced to allow him an income of 70,000 francs a year. Only a part of this was paid, but they gave him a small farm on which he lived comfortably until his death at eighty years of age.

CHAPTER XI
LAST DAYS OF THE BASTILE

Closing days of the Bastile—Latest inmates—Lally-Tollendal suffers death for alleged treason—Damiens attempts life of Louis XV—Sentence and execution—Dumouriez in the Bastile—Linguet and his experiences—Marquis de Sade—Cagliostro—The Revolution—Attack upon the Bastile—Weakly defended—Garrison massacred—De Launay, the governor, murdered—Demolition of the Bastile—Last days of Vincennes—The Temple prison survives in part—The last home of Louis XVI—Prisons in great request through Revolutionary epoch—Treatment in them more horrible than in old days—Unlimited atrocities.

The days of the Bastile's existence were numbered. It had not long to stand, but it maintained its reputation to the last. Philosophers, princes, libellous poets, unfortunate commanders and traitors to the State rubbed shoulders within.

De La Chalotais, the Attorney-General of Brittany, was committed in connection with a rising in his province and disputes with its Governor, the Duc d'Aiguillon; but chiefly for his hostility to the Jesuits,—a circumstance which culminated in the expulsion of the society from France and many of the Catholic countries of Europe. The Prince of Courland, Charles Ernest, an undeniable swindler and adventurer, was arrested and sent to the Bastile on a charge of forgery and detained there for three months. Marmontel, the historian, was committed, accused of writing a satire against the Duc d'Aumont, and has preserved an interesting account of his reception in the Castle.

"The Governor, after reading my letters," writes the historian, "allowed me to retain my valet.... I was ushered into a vast chamber, in which were two beds, two baths, a chest of drawers and three straw chairs. It was cold, but the gaoler made a good fire and brought plenty of wood. At the same time he gave me pen and ink and paper on condition of giving an account of how each sheet was employed. I found fault with my bed; said the mattresses were bad and the blankets unclean. All was instantly changed.... The Bastile library was placed at my disposal, but I had brought my own books." The dinner brought him was excellent. It was a *maigre* day and the soup was of

white beans and very fresh butter, a dish of salt cod for second service, also very good. This proved to be the servant's dinner and a second came in for Marmontel himself, served on china and fine linen with forks and spoons in silver, and was *gras*, consisting of an excellent soup, a succulent slice of beef, the fat leg of a boiled capon, a dish of artichokes, some spinach, a fine pear, some grapes, a bottle of old Burgundy and a cup of fragrant coffee. After all this he was still offered a chicken for supper. "On the whole," says Marmontel, "I found that one dined very well in prison." His stay in the Bastile was for a few days only, as the libel was the work of another, whom Marmontel would not betray.

Scant favor was shown to French officers of those days who were unsuccessful in war. One Dutreil was accused of misconduct in the defence of Martinique, and after trial by court martial was sentenced to military disgrace, to have his sword broken, the cross of St. Louis torn from his breast, and to be imprisoned for life. He came first to the Bastile with two other officers and passed on thence to the Isle of Sainte Marguerite to occupy the same prison as the whilom "Man with the Iron Mask." The harsh measure meted out to French officers who failed is much commented upon by the French historians. Too often disaster was directly traceable to neglect to provide means and the lack of proper support. It was seen already in India, and Dupleix bitterly complained that the government gave him no assistance, kept him ill supplied with money and sent out the most indifferent troops.

A very prominent and very flagrant case was that of Count Lally-Tollendal, who was denounced as having betrayed the interests of France, and caused the loss of her Indian possessions. He was of Irish extraction, a hot-headed, hare-brained Irishman, whose military skill was unequal to a difficult campaign. His had been an eventful career. He became a soldier in his tender years, and held a commission in Dillon's Irish regiment when no more than twelve and was engaged in the siege of Barcelona. He rose quickly to the command of a regiment, and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general at the early age of thirty-seven. At one time he conceived a plan for landing a body of ten thousand on the English coast to support the rights of the Pretender, and spent a large portion of his fortune in the carrying out of the scheme, which, of course, came to nothing. During his career as commander in India, the Count committed very grievous blunders,

and lacked the tact and diplomacy which had brought success to his great predecessor, Dupleix. Count Lally began by committing fearful excesses, and showed his contempt for the native religion by desecrating the most honored temples and sanctuaries. He triumphed over the English for a time, and drove them back into the heart of the country, whence they turned and attacked afresh; and having delayed his retreat he was defeated with considerable loss. Other disasters speedily followed until he was eventually surrounded and besieged in Pondichéry, which he defended and held with desperate bravery, but was forced at last to surrender.

Lally became a prisoner of war at the fall of Pondichéry and was sent to England. He heard there of the storm of abuse that was vented upon him in Paris, and he asked permission to go over and stand his trial. He was released on parole for the purpose, and arrived in his native country, taking with him "his head and his innocence," as he wrote to the Duc de Choiseul. A man of fierce temper and overbearing demeanor, he had made numerous enemies and incurred the bitter jealousy of his colleague, the naval commander in Indian waters, Comte d'Ache. When brought to trial after a long and wearisome detention for fifteen months in the Bastile, the long list of charges against him contained many that were pitiful and contemptible. When at last arraigned, the trial lingered on for more than a year and a half, when fresh evidence was found among the papers of Father Lavuar, the superior of the Jesuits in Pondichéry. The priest had gone to Paris to claim a pension from the government, but died suddenly, and it was found that he had left a large amount of gold and a number of documents compromising Lally-Tollendal's character and accusing him of treason and malversation. This testimony was accepted and led to his conviction and sentence to death.

His demeanor during his trial won him a certain sympathy with the crowd. The vehemence of his denials of guilt and his violent temper impressed people with an idea that he was a much wronged man. In England he had many apologists and supporters. It was said on his behalf that he went to India a perfect stranger to the country, he made native allies who proved false to him, his troops mutinied, he had no horsemen; yet he took ten fortresses, won nine battles and made a good fight until he was out-numbered, and all through was badly seconded by his own officers. Voltaire's opinion of him is worth quoting: "I am persuaded that Lally was

no traitor. I believe him to have been an odious man, a bad man, if you will, who deserved to be killed by any one except the executioner." Again, "It is very certain that his bad temper brought him to the scaffold. He is the only man who ever lost his head for being brutal."

The sentence of the Parliament was death by decapitation, and Lally was sent from the Bastile to the Conciergerie to hear his sentence. Great precautions were taken along the road as it was feared the populace might make some demonstration in his favor. He resented being compelled to kneel to hear sentence, and was greatly incensed when told he must die. "But what have I done?" he vainly protested. The sentence produced a great effect upon him, but he regained his self-possession on returning to the Bastile. Many persons interceded on his behalf, but the King remained unmoved, although public opinion remained the same and disapproved of his execution. The authorities, however, feared that the people might be inclined to rescue him, and therefore ordered him to be gagged while being led to the Place de Grève. The Count strongly resisted this mode of treatment, but the gag was placed in his mouth, and he was otherwise held in check. Just before the execution took place he ordered the headsman, young Sanson, to remove a handsome vest he (Lally) was wearing, composed of the golden tissue made only in India, and directed that it should be presented to the executioner's father, who was also present. The first blow from the younger was not successful, so the final act was performed by old Sanson, and was greeted with a cry of horror from the assembled crowds.

A hundred and fifty years had elapsed since Ravaillac had suffered for the assassination of Henri Quatre and had brought no diminution of the savage cruelty of the French criminal law. In 1757 the extreme penalty was inflicted upon another culprit who had dared to lift his hand against the cowardly voluptuary who occupied the throne, and in precisely the same bloodthirsty and abominable fashion. Ravaillac killed his victim; Damiens did no more than prick his man with the small blade of a horn handled penknife. Louis XV was so frightened at this pitiful wound that he "trembled between the sheets," under the strong belief that the weapon had been poisoned. A confessor was instantly summoned, and absolution was pronounced after the King had detailed his sins. This absolution was repeated aloud every minute of the night.

What had actually happened? It was an intensely cold night, the 5th of January, 1757, and the King, clad in his furs, came down-stairs at Versailles to enter his carriage. A crowd of courtiers, footmen and an escort surrounded the doorway as the King emerged on the arm of his grand equerry. Suddenly the King exclaimed, “Some one has struck me and pricked me with a pin. That man there!” and as he spoke he inserted his hand beneath his fur coat, to find it smeared with blood when he withdrew it. “That is certainly the man,” added the King, pointing to Damiens. “Let him be arrested, but do not kill him.” In the wild confusion that now arose, Damiens might easily have slunk away, but he stood his ground and was seized by the guards. Immediate vengeance was wreaked by his removal to the nearest guard-house, where he was put to the torture by the application of red-hot irons to his legs, but he would say no more than that he had not desired to kill the King, but only to give him a salutary warning.

Deep anxiety prevailed when this trifling attempt upon the life of a worthless, self-indulgent monarch was known through the country. The story was exaggerated absurdly. “This fearful attempt is of a nature to cause so just an alarm that I do not lose a moment,” writes one of the ministers, “in diminishing your apprehension and acquainting you with the facts of this terrible event.” After “the terrible accident,” the King was bled twice. “The wound is healthy, there is no fever, and he is perfectly tranquil, and would be inclined to sleep, were it not that the wound is on the right side, that on which his Majesty is accustomed to lie,” continued the minister. The provinces were greatly excited. “I found the whole city of Bordeaux in the greatest consternation,” writes the Lieutenant-Governor of Guienne. At Aix the courier was expected with breathless impatience, and good news was received with shouts of joy and clapping of hands. The delight at Marseilles when good news came was equal to the terror inspired by the first evil report.

Damiens was taken straight to the Conciergerie, where the legal machinery could be best set in motion for his trial and the preliminary torture. His conviction was a foregone conclusion, and his sentence in all its hideous particulars was on exactly the same lines as that of Ravaillac. He was to be subjected to the question, ordinary and extraordinary, to make the *amende honorable*, to have his right arm severed, his flesh torn off his body with red-hot pincers, and finally, while still alive, to be torn asunder limb from

limb by teams of horses in the Place de Grève. The whole of the details are preserved in contemporary accounts; but having been described in the case of Ravaillac, they are too brutal and revolting for a second reproduction.

The motive by which Damiens was led to this attempted crime is generally attributed to his disapproval of the King's licentious life. Louis so thought it, and for a time was disposed to mend his ways, to give up the infamous *Parc aux Cerfs* where he kept a harem, and to break with Madame de Pompadour. But the favorite was not dismissed from the apartments she occupied upon the top floor of the palace at Versailles, and the King still saw her from day to day. Her anxiety must have been great while the King's wound was still uncured, for she feigned illness and was constantly bled; but she soon recovered her health when she was reinstalled as the King's mistress. The occasion had been improved by the Jesuits, for the King when sick was very much in the hands of the priests; but de Pompadour triumphed, and the matter ended in their serious discomfiture and expulsion from France.

Although Damiens did not himself see the interior of the Bastile, many persons suspected of collusion in the crime were committed to it; some supposed to be accomplices, others as apologists or as authors of lampoons and satirical verses. Among the prisoners were Damiens's nearest relations, his wife and daughters, his father, mother, nieces, several abbés, ladies of mature years and young children. The detention of some of these was brief enough, but one or two were imprisoned for twenty odd years. The Dauphin was charged with complicity, but there was no more proof of it than that he was little at court, and was known to sympathise with the Jesuits. As a matter of fact no one was shown to be privy to the attempt. Damiens, in spite of the most horrible tortures, never betrayed a soul.

A story told by Jesse in his "Memoirs of George Selwyn" may be related here to give a ray of relief to this sombre picture. The eccentric Englishman was much addicted to the practice of attending executions. He went over to Paris on purpose to see Damiens done to death, and on the day mixed with the crowd. He was dressed in a plain undress suit and a plain bob wig, and "a French nobleman observing the deep interest he took in the scene, and imagining from the plainness of his attire that he must be a person in the humbler walks of life, resolved that he must infallibly be a hangman. '*Eh*

bien, monsieur,' said he, '*etes-vous arrive pour voir ce spectacle?*' '*Oui, monsieur.*' '*Vous etes bourreau?*' '*Non, monsieur*,' replied Selwyn, '*je n'ai pas cet honneur, je ne suis qu'un amateur.*'"

Among the latest records affording a graphic impression of the interior of the Bastile is that of the French officer Dumouriez, who afterwards became one of the first, and for a time, most successful of the Revolutionary generals, who won the battles of Fleurus and Jernappes and repelled the German invasion of the Argonne in the west of France. Dumouriez fled to England to save his head, and was the ancestor of one also famous, but in the peaceful fields of literature and art. George Du Maurier, whose name is held in high esteem amongst all English speaking races, traced his family direct to the French *emigré*, who lived long and died in London. It is a little curious that the eminent caricaturist who long brightened the pages of "Punch" the author of "Trilby," should be connected with the French monarchy and the ancient castle of evil memory.

The elder Dumouriez was imprisoned as the outcome of his connection with the devious diplomacy of his time. He had been despatched on a secret mission to Sweden on behalf of the King, but the French Minister of Foreign Affairs suspected foul play. The movements of Dumouriez were watched, and he was followed by spies as far as Hamburg, where he was arrested and brought back to France straight to the Bastile. He gives a minute account of his reception.

First he was deprived of all his possessions, his money, knife and shoe buckles, lest he should commit suicide by swallowing them. When he called for a chicken for his supper, he was told it was a fast day, Friday, but he indignantly replied that the major of the Bastile was not the keeper of his conscience if of his person, and the chicken was provided. Then he was ushered into his prison apartment, and found it barely furnished with a wooden table, a straw bottomed chair, a jar of water and a dirty bed. He slept well, but was aroused early to go before the Governor, the Comte de Jumilhac, who gave him a very courteous and cordial welcome, but, after denying him books and writing materials, ended by lending him several novels, which he begged him to hide. The Governor continued to treat him as a friend and companion rather than a prisoner. "He came and saw me every morning and gossiped over society's doings. He went so far as to

send me lemons and sugar to make lemonade, a small quantity of coffee, foreign wine and every day a dish from his own table, when he dined at home," he writes. No fault could be found with the daily fare in the Bastile. The quality was usually good and the supply abundant. "There were always five dishes for dinner and three for supper without counting the dessert." Besides, Dumouriez had his own servants, and one of them, the *valet de chambre*, was an excellent cook.

After a week of solitary confinement, which he had relieved by entering into communication with a neighbor, the captain of a Piedmontese regiment, who had been confined in the Bastile for twenty-two years for writing a song about Madame de Pompadour, which had been hawked all over Paris, Dumouriez was removed to another chamber which he describes as "a very fine apartment with a good fireplace." Near the fireplace was an excellent bed, which had been slept in by many notable inmates of the prison. The major of the Bastile said it was the finest room in the castle, but it had not always brought good luck. Most of its previous inhabitants, the Comte de St. Pol, the Maréchal de Biron, the Chevalier de Rohan and the Count de Lally-Tollendal, ended their days upon the scaffold. Significant traces of them were to be found in the sad inscriptions upon the walls. Labourdonnais had inscribed some "touching reflections;" Lally had written some remarks in English; and La Chalotais some paraphrases of the Psalms. Dumouriez's immediate predecessor had been a young priest, who had been forced into taking orders and tried to evade his vows, inherit an estate and marry the girl of his choice. He was committed to the Bastile, but was presently released on writing an impassioned appeal for liberty.

Dumouriez was detained only six months in the Bastile and was then transferred to Caen in Normandy, where he was handsomely lodged, and had a garden to walk in. The death of Louis XV and the complete change of government upon the accession of the ill-fated Louis XVI immediately released him. He came to Court and was told at a public reception that the new King profoundly regretted the harshness with which he had been treated, and that the State would make him amends by promotion and employment.

With Louis XVI began a milder and more humane régime, too late, however, to stave off the swiftly gathering storm that was soon to shake and

shatter France. The King desired to retain no more State prisoners arbitrarily, and sent a minister to visit the prisons of the Bastile, Vincennes and Bicêtre to inquire personally into the cases of all, and to liberate any against whom there was no definite charge. He proposed that there should be no more *lettres de cachet*, and the Bastile became gradually less and less filled. The committals were chiefly of offenders against the common law, thieves and swindlers; but a large contingent of pamphleteers and their publishers were lodged within its walls, and one ancient prisoner still lingered to die there after a confinement of twenty-seven years. This was Bertin, Marquis de Frateau, guilty of writing lampoons on Madame de Pompadour, and originally confined at the request of his own family.

A man who made more mark was Linguet, whose "Memoirs," containing a bitter indictment of the Bastile, from personal experience, were widely read both in England and France. They were actually written in London, to which he fled after imprisonment, and are now held to be mendacious and untrustworthy. Linguet had led a strangely varied life. He had tried many lines—had been in turn poet, historian, soldier, lawyer, journalist. He wrote parodies for the Opera Comique and pamphlets in favor of the Jesuits. Such a man was certain to find himself in the Bastile. He spent a couple of years there, and the book he subsequently wrote was full of the most extravagant and easily refuted lies. Yet there is reason to believe that his statements did much to inflame the popular mind and increase the fierce hatred of the old prison, which ere long was to lead to its demolition.

The Bastile also received that infamous creature, most justly imprisoned, the Marquis de Sade, whose name has been synonymous with the grossest immorality and is now best known to medical jurisprudence. Beyond doubt he was a lunatic, a man of diseased and deranged mind, who was more properly relegated to Charenton, where he died. He was at large during the Revolutionary period and survived it, but dared to offer some of his most loathsome books to Napoleon, who when First Consul wrote an order with his own hand for the return of the Marquis to Charenton as a dangerous and incurable madman.

One of the last celebrities confined in the Bastile was the Cardinal de Rohan, a grandee of the Church and the holder of many dignities, who was involved in that famous fraud, dear to dramatists and romance writers, the

affair of the Diamond Necklace. His confederates, some of whom shared his captivity, were the well known Italian adventurer and arch impostor, who went by the name of Cagliostro, who played upon the credulity of the gullible public in many countries as a latter day magician, and the two women, Madame de La Motte-Valois, who devised the fraud of impersonating the Queen before de Rohan, and Mdlle. d'Oliva, who impersonated her.

We come now to the eventful year 1789, when the waters were closing over the Bastile, and it was to sink under the flood and turmoil of popular passion in the first stormy phase of the French Revolution. Paris was in the throes of agitation and disturbance, the streets filled with thousands of reckless ruffians, who terrorised the capital, breaking into and plundering the shops, the convents, even the royal *Garde-Meuble*, the repository of the Crown jewels; and committing the most violent excesses. A large force of troops was collected in and about Paris, more than sufficient to maintain order had the spirit to do so been present in the leaders or had they been backed up by authority. But the King and his Government were too weak to act with decision, and, as the disorders increased, it was seen that no reliance could be placed upon the French Guards, who were ripe for revolt and determined to fraternise with the people. The people clamored for arms and ammunition, and seized upon a large quantity of powder as it was being removed secretly from Paris. Fifty thousand pikes were turned out in thirty-six hours.

Two revolutionary committees directed affairs, and it was mooted at one of them whether an attack should not be made upon the Bastile. The more cautious minds demurred. It would be neither useful nor feasible to gain possession of the ancient fortress which, with its guns mounted and its impregnable walls, might surely make a vigorous resistance. At last it was decreed to approach the Governor of the Bastile with peaceful overtures, asking him to receive a garrison of Parisian citizen-militia within the place as a measure of public safety. M. de Launay, the veteran Governor, civilly received the deputations with this proposal, but although inwardly uneasy would make no concessions. He awaited orders which never arrived, but was stoutly determined to do his duty and remain staunch to the King.

His position was indeed precarious. The garrison consisted of a handful of troops, chiefly old pensioners. The guns on the ramparts were of obsolete pattern, mostly mounted on marine carriages, and they could not be depressed or fired except into the air. Moreover the powder magazine was full, for the whole stock of powder had been removed from the Arsenal, where it was exposed to attack and seizure, and it was now lodged in the cellars of the Bastile. But the Governor had done his best to strengthen his defence. Windows had been barred, and exposed loopholes closed. A bastion for flanking fire had been thrown out from the garden wall. Great quantities of paving stones had been carried up to the tops of the Towers, and steps taken to pull down the chimney pots,—the whole for use as missiles to be discharged on the heads of the besiegers. Nevertheless the place could not hold out long, for it was almost entirely unprovisioned.

The attack upon the Bastile appears to have been precipitated by a cowardly report spread that the guns of the castle were ranged upon the city and that a bombardment was threatened. A deputation was forthwith despatched to the Governor, insisting the direction of the guns be changed and inviting him to surrender. M. de Launay replied that the guns pointed as they had done from time immemorial, and that he could not remove them without the King's order, but he would withdraw them from the embrasure. This deputation retired satisfied, assuring the Governor that he need expect no attack, and went back to the Hotel de Ville. But presently an armed mob arrived, shouting that they must have the Bastile. They were politely requested to return, but some turbulent spirits insisted that the drawbridges should be lowered, and when the first was down, advanced across them, although repeatedly warned that unless they halted, the garrison would open fire. But the people, warmed with their success, pressed on, and a sharp musketry duet began, and put the assailants to flight in great disorder, but did not send them far. Presently they came on again toward the second drawbridge and prepared to break in by it, when firing was resumed and many casualties ensued.

At half past four o'clock in the afternoon three carts laden with straw were sent forward and used to set fire to the outbuildings, the guard-house, the Governor's residence and the kitchens. A number of French grenadiers with three hundred citizens now advanced and made good their entrance; but the drawbridge was let down behind them and a cry of treachery arose. Fire

was opened on both sides and a sharp combat ensued. The issue might have been different had the defence been better organised, but the garrison was small (barely a hundred men), was short of ammunition, had not taken food for forty-eight hours, and could make no use of the artillery. At five o'clock M. de Launay, hopeless of success, desired to blow up the powder magazine, urging that voluntary death was preferable to massacre by the infuriated people. The vote of the majority was against this desperate means and in favor of capitulation. Accordingly a white flag was hoisted on one of the towers to the sound of the drum, but it was ignored, and the firing continued amid loud shouts of "Lower the drawbridge! Nothing will happen to you!" The Governor thereupon handed over the keys to a subordinate officer. The mob rushed in and the fate of the garrison was sealed. The sub-officers, who had laid down their arms and were unable to defend themselves, were killed, and so also were the grand old Swiss Guards, stalwart veterans, who were slaughtered with but few exceptions.

In the midst of the affray, M. de Launay was seized and carried off to the Hotel de Ville. Frenzied cries of "Hang him! Hang him!" greeted him on the way, and the unfortunate Governor is reported to have looked up to Heaven, saying, "Kill me. I prefer death to insults I have not deserved." They now fell upon him from all sides with bayonet, musket and pike, and as a dragoon passed, he was called upon to cut off the victim's head. This man, Denot (whose own account has been followed in this description), essayed first with a sword, then completed the decapitation with his knife. The severed head was paraded through Paris till nightfall on a pike. This was the first of many similar atrocities. The people, without restraint, became intoxicated with brutal exultation. The wildest orgies took place, and the wine shops were crowded with drunken desperadoes, who were the heroes of the hour. The now defenceless castle was visited by thousands to witness its final destruction. Numbers of carriages passed before it or halted to watch the demolition as the stones were thrown down from its towers amid clouds of dust. Ladies, fashionably dressed, and dandies of the first water mingled with the half-naked workmen, and were now jeered at, now applauded. The most prominent personages, great authors and orators, celebrated painters, popular actors and actresses, nobles, courtiers and ambassadors assembled to view the scene of old France expiring and new France in the throes of birth.

The wreck and ruin of the Bastile were speedily accomplished. The people were undisputed masters, and they swarmed over the abased stronghold, filling it from top to bottom. “Some threw the guns from the battlements into the ditch; others with pickaxes and hammers labored to undermine and destroy the towers. These smashed in furniture, tore and dispersed all the books, registers and records; those laid prompt hands on anything they fancied. Some looted the rooms and carried off what they pleased. Strict search was made through the Bastile for prisoners to set free, yet the cells were for the most part empty. The committals during this last reign had not exceeded 190 for the whole period, and when it capitulated only seven were in custody. Gruesome rumors prevailed that several still lingered underground, in deep subterranean cells; but none were found, nor any skeletons, when the whole edifice was pulled down.”

This demolition was voted next year, 1790, by the committee of the Hotel de Ville, which ordered that “the antique fortress too long the terror of patriotism and liberty” should be utterly razed to its very foundations. The workmen set to work with so much expedition that in a little more than three months a portion of the materials was offered for sale. A sharp competition ensued at the auction, and the stones were fashioned into mementoes, set in rings, bracelets and brooches, and fetched high prices. The contractors for demolition made a small fortune by the sale of these trinkets.

Napoleon at first intended to erect his great Arc de Triomphe upon the site of the Bastile, but changed his mind and selected the place where it now stands. The Place de la Bastile remained for forty years a wilderness—in summer a desert, in winter a swamp. The revolution of 1830, which placed Louis Philippe upon the throne of France, was not accomplished without bloodshed, and it was decided to raise a monument to those who lost their lives on this somewhat unimportant occasion. The result was the elegant column, which every visitor to Paris may admire to-day in the Place de la Bastile.

Vincennes, the second State prison of Paris, survived the Terror and exists to this day converted into a barracks for artillery. A portion of the Temple, the especial stronghold of the Knights Templars already described, still existed in part when the Revolution came. Strange to say, its demolition had

been contemplated by the Government of Louis XVI, and it had already partly disappeared when the storm broke, and rude hands were laid upon the luckless sovereign who became a scapegoat, bearing the accumulated sins of a long line of criminal and self-indulgent monarchs. When Louis and his family fell into the power of the stern avengers of many centuries of wrong doing, they were hurried to the Temple and imprisoned in the last vestige of the fortress palace. It stood quite isolated and alone. All had been razed to the ground but the donjon tower, to which was attached a small strip of garden enclosed between high walls. This became the private exercise ground of the fallen royalties. The King occupied the first floor of the prison and his family the second floor. The casements were secured with massive iron bars, the windows were close shuttered so that light scarcely entered, and those within were forbidden to look out upon the world below. The staircase was protected by six wicket gates, each so low and narrow that it was necessary to stoop and squeeze to get through. Upon the King's incarceration a seventh wicket was added with an iron bar fixed at the top of the staircase, always locked and heavily barred. The door opening directly into the King's chamber was lined with iron.

Louis was never left alone. Two guards were constantly with him day and night, as is the rule to this day with condemned malefactors in France. They sat with him in the dining-room when at meals and slept in the immediate neighborhood of his bedroom. His guards were in the last degree suspicious, and he endured many indignities at their hands. No whispering was allowed, not even with his wife and children. If he spoke to his valet, who slept in his room at night, it must be audibly, and the King was constantly admonished to speak louder. No writing materials were allowed him at first. He was forbidden to use pens, ink and paper until he was arraigned before the National Convention. But he was not denied the solace of books, and read and re-read his favorite authors. In Latin he preferred Livy, Cæsar, Horace, Virgil. In French he preferred books of travel. For a time he was supplied with newspapers, but his gaolers disliked his too great interest in the progress of the Revolution, and the news of the day was withheld from him. His reading became the more extensive and it was calculated on the eve of his death that he had read through 257 volumes during the five months and seven days of his captivity in the Temple.

The daily routine of his prison life was monotonously repeated. He rose early and remained at his prayers till nine o'clock, at which hour his family joined him in the breakfast room as long as this was permitted. He ate nothing at that hour but made it a rule to fast till midday dinner. After breakfast he found pleasant employment in acting as schoolmaster to his children. He taught the little Dauphin Latin and geography, while the Queen, Marie Antoinette, instructed their daughter and worked with her needle. Dinner was at one o'clock. The table was well supplied, but the King ate sparingly and drank little, the Queen limiting herself to water with her food. Meat was regularly served, even on Fridays, for religious observances no more controlled his keepers, and the King would limit himself to fast diet by dipping his bread in a little wine and eating nothing else. The rest of the day was passed in mild recreation, playing games with the children till supper at nine o'clock, after which the King saw his son to bed in the little pallet prepared by his own hands.

The time drew on in sickening suspense, but Louis displayed the unshaken fortitude of one who could rise above almost intolerable misfortune. Insult and grievous annoyance were heaped upon his devoted head. His valet was changed continually so that he might have no faithful menial by his side. The most humiliating precautions were taken against his committing suicide —not a scrap of metal, not even a penknife or any steel instrument was suffered to be taken in to him. His food was strictly tested and examined; the prison cook tasted every dish under the eyes of a sentry, to guard against the admixture of poison. The most horrible outrage of all was when the bloodthirsty *sans-culottes* thrust in at his cell window the recently severed and still bleeding head of one of the favorites of the court, the Princess de Lamballe.

We may follow out the dreadful story to its murderous end. Years of tyrannous misgovernment in France, innumerable deeds of blood and cruel oppression, such as have been already presented in this volume, culminated in the sacrifice of the unhappy representative of a system to which he succeeded and innocently became responsible for. The bitter wrongs endured for centuries by a downtrodden people, goaded at length to the most sanguinary reprisals, were avenged in the person of a blameless ruler. Louis XVI was a martyr beyond question; but he only expiated the sins of his truculent and ferocious forerunners, who had no pity, no mercy, no

compassion for their weak and helpless subjects. Louis' trial, under a parody of justice, and his execution amid the hideous gibes of a maddened, merciless crowd, was the price paid by the last of the French kings, for years of uncontrolled and arbitrary authority.

The day of arraignment, so long and painfully anticipated, came as a sudden surprise. On Monday, December 10th, 1793, the captive King when at his prayers was startled by the beating of drums and the neighing of horses in the courtyard below the Donjon. He could not fix his attention on the morning lesson to his son, and was playing with him idly when the visit of the Mayor of Paris roused him and summoned him by the name of Louis Capet to appear at the bar of the Convention. He then heard the charges against him, and the day passed in mock proceedings of the tribunal. The King's demeanor was brave, his countenance unappalled by the tumultuous outbursts that often came from the audience in the galleries. As the judges could come to no agreement on the first day, the proceedings were declared "open," to be continued without intermission. For three more days the stormy debates lasted and still the Convention hesitated to pass the death sentence on the King. In the end it was carried by a majority of five.

Louis XVI bore himself like a brave man to the last. He addressed a farewell letter to the Convention in which he said, "I owe it to my honor and to my family not to subscribe to a sentence which declares me guilty of a crime of which I cannot accuse myself." When he was taken to execution from the Temple and first saw the guillotine, he is said to have shuddered and shrank back, but quickly recovering himself he stepped out of the carriage with firmness and composure and, calmly ascending the scaffold, went to his death like a brave man.

The Bastile was gone, but the need for prisons was far greater under the reign of liberty, so-called, than when despotic sovereigns ruled the land. The last of them, Louis XVI, would himself have swept away the Bastile had he been spared. He had indeed razed For-l'Evèque and the Petit Châtelet, and imported many salutary changes into the Conciergerie out of his own private purse. During the Revolutionary epoch many edifices were appropriated for purposes of detention, the ordinary prisons being crowded to overflowing. In the Conciergerie alone, while some two thousand people waited elsewhere for vacancies, there were from one thousand to twelve

hundred lodged within the walls without distinction of age, sex or social position. Men, women and children were herded together, as many as fifty in the space of twenty feet. A few had beds, but the bulk of them slept on damp straw at the mercy of voracious rats that gnawed at their clothing and would have devoured their noses and ears had they not protected their faces with their hands.

Within six months of 1790, 356 prisoners were confined in the prisons of Bicêtre, Luxembourg, the Carmelites and Saint Lazare, en route to the guillotine. St. Pélagie held 360 at one time. “In Paris,” says Carlyle, “are now some twelve prisons, in France some forty-four thousand.” Lamartine’s figures for Paris are higher. He gives the number of prisons as eighteen, into which all the members of the Parliament, all the receivers-general, all the magistrates, all the nobility and all the clergy were congregated to be dragged thence to the scaffold. Four thousand heads fell in a few months. A number of simple maidens, the eldest only eighteen, who had attended a ball at Verdun when it was captured by the Prussians, were removed to Paris and executed. All the nuns of the Convent of Montmartre were guillotined, and next day the venerable Abbé Fenelon. In September, 1792, there was an indiscriminate massacre, when five thousand suspected persons were torn from their homes and either slaughtered on the spot or sent to impromptu prisons. That of the Abbaye ran with blood, where 150 Swiss soldier prisoners were murdered at one sweep. The details of these sanguinary scenes are too terrible to print. Every prison provided its quota of victims—La Force 80, the great Châtelet 220, and 290 from the Conciergerie.

“At Bicêtre,” says Thiers, in his history of the Revolution, “the carnage was the longest, the most sanguinary, the most terrible. This prison was the sink for every vice, the sewer of Paris. Everyone detained in it was killed. It would be impossible to fix the number of victims, but they have been estimated at six thousand. Death was dealt out through eight consecutive days and nights; pikes, sabres, muskets did not suffice for the ferocious assassins, who had recourse to guns.” Another authority, Colonel Munro, the English diplomatist, reported to Lord Grenville that Bicêtre was attacked by a mob with seven cannon, which were loaded with small stones and discharged promiscuously into the yards crowded with prisoners. Three days later, he writes: “The massacre only ended yesterday and the number of the victims may be gathered from the time it took to murder them.” He

puts the total at La Force and Bicêtre at seven thousand, and the victims were mostly madmen, idiots and the infirm.

The picture of these awful times is lurid and terrible, and brings the prevailing horror vividly before us. The prisons of Paris were thirty-six in number, all of large dimensions, with ninety-six provisional gaols. In the French provinces the latter were forty thousand in number, and twelve hundred more were regularly filled with a couple of hundred inmates. The most cruel barbarities were everywhere practised. Prisoners were starved and mutilated so that they might be driven into open revolt and justify their more rapid removal by the guillotine. Paris sent 2,600 victims to the scaffold in one year. In the provincial cities the slaughter was wholesale. Lyons executed 1,600, Nantes, 1,971, and a hundred were guillotined or shot daily. Many were women, some of advanced age and infirm. At Angers, to disencumber the prisons, 400 men and 360 women were beheaded in a few days. Wholesale massacres were perpetrated in the fusillades of Toulon and the drownings of Nantes, which disposed of nearly five thousand in all. Taine says that in the eleven departments of the west half of France a million persons perished, and the murderous work was performed in seventeen months.

Of a truth the last state of France was worse than the first, and the sufferings endured by the people at the hands of irresponsible autocracy were far outdone by the new atrocities of the bloodthirsty revolutionaries in mad vindication of past wrongs.

END OF VOLUME III.

Transcriber's Note:

Every effort has been made to replicate this text as faithfully as possible, including some inconsistent hyphenation. Some minor corrections of spelling have been made.

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