

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis  
Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane  
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Verne  
Burroughs Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Curtis Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain  
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott  
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte  
London Descartes Cervantes Wells Hesse  
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**Memoirs of Louis XIV and His  
Court and of the Regency –  
Volume 11**

Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon

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**MEMOIRS OF LOUIS XIV AND HIS COURT AND  
OF THE REGENCY**

**BY**

**THE DUKE OF SAINT-SIMON**



## VOLUME 11.

### CHAPTER LXXVIII

After having thus described with truth and the most exact fidelity all that has come to my knowledge through my own experience, or others qualified to speak of Louis XIV. during the last twenty-two years of his life: and after having shown him such as he was, without prejudice (although I have permitted myself to use the arguments naturally resulting from things), nothing remains but to describe the outside life of this monarch, during my residence at the Court.

However insipid and perhaps superfluous details so well known may appear after what has been already given, lessons will be found therein for kings who may wish to make themselves respected, and who may wish to respect themselves. What determines me still more is, that details wearying, nay annoying, to instructed readers, who had been witnesses of what I relate, soon escape the knowledge of posterity; and that experience shows us how much we regret that no one takes upon himself a labour, in his own time so ungrateful, but in future years so interesting, and by which princes, who have made quite as much stir as the one in question, are characterise. Although it may be difficult to steer clear of repetitions, I will do my best to avoid them.

I will not speak much of the King's manner of living when with the army. His hours were determined by what was to be done, though he held his councils regularly; I will simply say, that morning and evening he ate with people privileged to have that honour. When any one wished to claim it, the first gentleman of the chamber on duty was appealed to. He gave the answer, and if favourable you presented yourself the next day to the King, who said to you, "Mon-

sieur, seat yourself at table." That being done, all was done. Ever afterwards you were at liberty to take a place at the King's table, but with discretion. The number of the persons from whom a choice was made was, however, very limited. Even very high military rank did not suffice. M. de Vauban, at the siege of Namur, was overwhelmed by the distinction. The King did the same honour at Namur to the Abbe de Grancey, who exposed himself everywhere to confess the wounded and encourage the troops. No other Abbe was ever so distinguished. All the clergy were excluded save the cardinals, and the bishops, piers, or the ecclesiastics who held the rank of foreign princes.

At these repasts everybody was covered; it would have been a want of respect, of which you would have been immediately informed, if you had not kept your hat on your head. The King alone was uncovered. When the King wished to speak to you, or you had occasion to speak to him, you uncovered. You uncovered, also, when Monseigneur or Monsieur spoke to you, or you to them. For Princes of the blood you merely put your hand to your hat. The King alone had an armchair. All the rest of the company, Monseigneur included, had seats, with backs of black morocco leather, which could be folded up to be carried, and which were called "parrots." Except at the army, the King never ate with any man, under whatever circumstances; not even with the Princes of the Blood, save sometimes at their wedding feasts.

Let us return now to the Court.

At eight o'clock the chief valet de chambre on duty, who alone had slept in the royal chamber, and who had dressed himself, awoke the King. The chief physician, the chief surgeon, and the nurse (as long as she lived), entered at the same time; the latter kissed the King; the others rubbed and often changed his shirt, because he was in the habit of sweating a great deal. At the quarter, the grand chamberlain was called (or, in his absence, the first gentleman of the chamber), and those who had what was called the 'grandes entrees'. The chamberlain (or chief gentleman) drew back the curtains which had been closed again; and presented the holy-water from the vase, at the head of the bed. These gentlemen stayed but a moment, and that was the time to speak to the King, if any one

had anything to ask of him; in which case the rest stood aside. When, contrary to custom, nobody had ought to say, they were there but for a few moments. He who had opened the curtains and presented the holy-water, presented also a prayer-book. Then all passed into the cabinet of the council. A very short religious service being over, the King called, they re-entered, The same officer gave him his dressing-gown; immediately after, other privileged courtiers entered, and then everybody, in time to find the King putting on his shoes and stockings, for he did almost everything himself and with address and grace. Every other day we saw him shave himself; and he had a little short wig in which he always appeared, even in bed, and on medicine days. He often spoke of the chase, and sometimes said a-word to somebody. No toilette table was near him; he had simply a mirror held before him.

As soon as he was dressed, he prayed to God, at the side of his bed, where all the clergy present knelt, the cardinals without cushions, all the laity remaining standing; and the captain of the guards came to the balustrade during the prayer, after which the King passed into his cabinet.

He found there, or was followed by all who had the entree, a very numerous company, for it included everybody in any office. He gave orders to each for the day; thus within a half a quarter of an hour it was known what he meant to do; and then all this crowd left directly. The bastards, a few favourites; and the valets alone were left. It was then a good opportunity for talking with the King; for example, about plans of gardens and buildings; and conversation lasted more or less according to the person engaged in it.

All the Court meantime waited for the King in the gallery, the captain of the guard being alone in the chamber seated at the door of the cabinet. At morning the Court awaited in the saloon; at Trianon in the front rooms as at Meudon; at Fontainebleau in the chamber and ante-chamber. During this pause the King gave audiences when he wished to accord any; spoke with whoever he might wish to speak secretly to, and gave secret interviews to foreign ministers in presence of Torcy. They were called "secret" simply to distinguish them from the uncommon ones by the bedsides.

The King went to mass, where his musicians always sang an anthem. He did not go below — except on grand fetes or at ceremonies. Whilst he was going to and returning from mass, everybody spoke to him who wished, after apprising the captain of the guard, if they were not distinguished; and he came and went by the door of the cabinet into the gallery. During the mass the ministers assembled in the King's chamber, where distinguished people could go and speak or chat with them. The King amused himself a little upon returning from mass and asked almost immediately for the council. Then the morning was finished.

On Sunday, and often on Monday, there was a council of state; on Tuesday a finance council; on Wednesday council of state; on Saturday finance council: rarely were two held in one day or any on Thursday or Friday. Once or twice a month there was a council of despatches on Monday morning; but the order that the Secretaries of State took every morning between the King's rising and his mass, much abridged this kind of business. All the ministers were seated accordingly to rank, except at the council of despatches, where all stood except the sons of France, the Chancellor, and the Duc de Beauvilliers.

Thursday morning was almost always blank. It was the day for audiences that the King wished to give — often unknown to any — back-stair audiences. It was also the grand day taken advantage of by the bastards, the valets, etc., because the King had nothing to do. On Friday after the mass the King was with his confessor, and the length of their audiences was limited by nothing, and might last until dinner. At Fontainebleau on the mornings when there was no council, the King usually passed from mass to Madame de Maintenon's, and so at Trianon and Marly. It was the time for their tete-a-tete without interruption. Often on the days when there was no council the dinner hour was advanced, more or less for the chase or the promenade. The ordinary hour was one o'clock; if the council still lasted, then the dinner waited and nothing was said to the King.

The dinner was always 'au petit couvert', that is, the King ate by himself in his chamber upon a square table in front of the middle window. It was more or less abundant, for he ordered in the morn-

ing whether it was to be "a little," or "very little" service. But even at this last, there were always many dishes, and three courses without counting the fruit. The dinner being ready, the principal courtiers entered; then all who were known; and the gentleman of the chamber on duty informed the King.

I have seen, but very rarely, Monseigneur and his sons standing at their dinners, the King not offering them a seat. I have continually seen there the Princes of the blood and the cardinals. I have often seen there also Monsieur, either on arriving from Saint-Cloud to see the King, or arriving from the council of despatches (the only one he entered), give the King his napkin and remain standing. A little while afterwards, the King, seeing that he did not go away, asked him if he would not sit down; he bowed, and the King ordered a seat to be brought for him. A stool was put behind him. Some moments after the King said, "Nay then, sit down, my brother." Monsieur bowed and seated himself until the end of the dinner, when he presented the napkin.

At other times when he came from Saint-Cloud, the King, on arriving at the table, asked for a plate for Monsieur, or asked him if he would dine. If he refused, he went away a moment after, and there was no mention of a seat; if he accepted, the King asked for a plate for him. The table was square, he placed himself at one end, his back to the cabinet. Then the Grand Chamberlain (or the first gentleman of the chamber) gave him drink and plates, taking them from him as he finished with them, exactly as he served the King; but Monsieur received all this attention with strongly marked politeness. When he dined thus with the King he much enlivened the conversation. The King ordinarily spoke little at table unless some family favourite was near. It was the same at his rising. Ladies scarcely ever were seen at these little dinners.

I have, however, seen the Marechale de la Mothe, who came in because she had been used to do so as governess to the children of France, and who received a seat, because she was a Duchess. Grand dinners were very rare, and only took place on grand occasions, and then ladies were present.

Upon leaving the table the King immediately entered his cabinet. That was the time for distinguished people to speak to him. He

stopped at the door a moment to listen, then entered; very rarely did any one follow him, never without asking him for permission to do so; and for this few had the courage. If followed he placed himself in the embrasure of the window nearest to the door of the cabinet, which immediately closed of itself, and which you were obliged to open yourself on quitting the King. This also was the time for the bastards and the valets.

The King amused himself by feeding his dogs, and remained with them more or less time, then asked for his wardrobe, changed before the very few distinguished people it pleased the first gentleman of the chamber to admit there, and immediately went out by the back stairs into the court of marble to get into his coach. From the bottom of that staircase to the coach, any one spoke to him who wished.

The King was fond of air, and when deprived of it his health suffered; he had headaches and vapours caused by the undue use he had formerly made of perfumes, so that for many years he could not endure any, except the odour of orange flowers; therefore if you had to approach anywhere near him you did well not to carry them.

As he was but little sensitive to heat or cold, or even to rain, the weather was seldom sufficiently bad to prevent his going abroad. He went out for three objects: stag-hunting, once or more each week; shooting in his parks (and no man handled a gun with more grace or skill), once or twice each week; and walking in his gardens for exercise, and to see his workmen. Sometimes he made picnics with ladies, in the forest at Marly or at Fontainebleau, and in this last place, promenades with all the Court around the canal, which was a magnificent spectacle. Nobody followed him in his other promenades but those who held principal offices, except at Versailles or in the gardens of Trianon. Marly had a privilege unknown to the other places. On going out from the chateau, the King said aloud, "Your hats, gentlemen," and immediately courtiers, officers of the guard, everybody, in fact, covered their heads, as he would have been much displeased had they not done so; and this lasted all the promenade, that is four or five hours in summer, or in other seasons, when he dined early at Versailles to go and walk at Marly, and not sleep there.

The stag-hunting parties were on an extensive scale. At Fontainebleau every one went who wished; elsewhere only those were allowed to go who had obtained the permission once for all, and those who had obtained leave to wear the justau-corps, which was a blue uniform with silver and gold lace, lined with red. The King did not like too many people at these parties. He did not care for you to go if you were not fond of the chase. He thought that ridiculous, and never bore ill-will to those who stopped away altogether.

It was the same with the play-table, which he liked to see always well frequented—with high stakes—in the saloon at Marly, for lansquenet and other games. He amused himself at Fontainebleau during bad weather by seeing good players at tennis, in which he had formerly excelled; and at Marly by seeing mall played, in which he had also been skilful. Sometimes when there was no council, he would make presents of stuff, or of silverware, or jewels, to the ladies, by means of a lottery, for the tickets of which they paid nothing. Madame de Maintenon drew lots with the others, and almost always gave at once what she gained. The King took no ticket.

Upon returning home from walks or drives, anybody, as I have said, might speak to the King from the moment he left his coach till he reached the foot of his staircase. He changed his dress again, and rested in his cabinet an hour or more, then went to Madame de Maintenon's, and on the way any one who wished might speak to him.

At ten o'clock his supper was served. The captain of the guard announced this to him. A quarter of an hour after the King came to supper, and from the antechamber of Madame de Maintenon to the table—again, any one spoke to him who wished. This supper was always on a grand scale, the royal household (that is, the sons and daughters of France) at table, and a large number of courtiers and ladies present, sitting or standing, and on the evening before the journey to Marly all those ladies who wished to take part in it. That was called presenting yourself for Marly. Men asked in the morning, simply saying to the King, "Sire, Marly." In later years the King grew tired of this, and a valet wrote up in the gallery the names of those who asked. The ladies continued to present themselves.

After supper the King stood some moments, his back to the balustrade of the foot of his bed, encircled by all his Court; then, with bows to the ladies, passed into his cabinet, where, on arriving, he gave his orders.

He passed a little less than an hour there, seated in an armchair, with his legitimate children and bastards, his grandchildren, legitimate and otherwise, and their husbands or wives. Monsieur in another armchair; the Princesses upon stools, Monseigneur and all the other Princes standing.

The King, wishing to retire, went and fed his dogs; then said good night, passed into his chamber to the 'ruelle' of his bed, where he said his prayers, as in the morning, then undressed. He said good night with an inclination of the head, and whilst everybody was leaving the room stood at the corner of the mantelpiece, where he gave the order to the colonel of the guards alone. Then commenced what was called the 'petit coucher', at which only the specially privileged remained. That was short. They did not leave until he got into bed. It was a moment to speak to him. Then all left if they saw any one buckle to the King. For ten or twelve years before he died the 'petit coucher' ceased, in consequence of a long attack of gout he had had; so that the Court was finished at the rising from supper.

On medicine days, which occurred about once a month, the King remained in bed, then heard mass. The royal household came to see him for a moment, and Madame de Maintenon seated herself in the armchair at the head of his bed. The King dined in bed about three o'clock, everybody being allowed to enter the room, then rose, and the privileged alone remained. He passed afterwards into his cabinet, where he held a council, and afterwards went, as usual, to Madame de Maintenon's and supped at ten o'clock, according to custom.

During all his life, the King failed only once in his attendance at mass. It was with the army, during a forced march; he missed no fast day, unless really indisposed. Some days before Lent, he publicly declared that he should be very much displeased if any one ate meat or gave it to others, under any pretext. He ordered the grand prevot to look to this, and report all cases of disobedience. But no one dared to disobey his commands, for they would soon have

found out the cost. They extended even to Paris, where the lieutenant of police kept watch and reported. For twelve or fifteen years he had himself not observed Lent, however. At church he was very respectful. During his mass everybody was obliged to kneel at the Sanctus, and to remain so until after the communion of the priest; and if he heard the least noise, or saw anybody talking during the mass, he was much displeased. He took the communion five times a year, in the collar of the Order, band, and cloak. On Holy Thursday, he served the poor at dinner; at the mass he said his chaplet (he knew no more), always kneeling, except at the Gospel.

He was always clad in dresses more or less brown, lightly embroidered, but never at the edges, sometimes with nothing but a gold button, sometimes black velvet. He wore always a vest of cloth, or of red, blue, or green satin, much embroidered. He used no ring; and no jewels, except in the buckles of his shoes, garters, and hat, the latter always trimmed with Spanish point, with a white feather. He had always the cordon bleu outside, except at fetes, when he wore it inside, with eight or ten millions of precious stones attached.

Rarely a fortnight passed that the King did not go to Saint-Germain, even after the death of King James the Second. The Court of Saint-Germain came also to Versailles, but oftener to Marly, and frequently to sup there; and no fete or ceremony took place to which they were not invited, and at which they were not received with all honours. Nothing could compare with the politeness of the King for this Court, or with the air of gallantry and of majesty with which he received it at any time. Birth days, or the fete days of the King and his family, so observed in the courts of Europe, were always unknown in that of the King; so that there never was the slightest mention of them, or any difference made on their account.

The King was but little regretted. His valets and a few other people felt his loss, scarcely anybody else. His successor was not yet old enough to feel anything. Madame entertained for him only fear and considerate respect. Madame la Duchesse de Berry did not like him, and counted now upon reigning undisturbed. M. le Duc d'Orleans could scarcely be expected to feel much grief for him. And those who may have been expected did not consider it necessary to do

their duty. Madame de Maintenon was wearied with him ever since the death of the Dauphine; she knew not what to do, or with what to amuse him; her constraint was tripled because he was much more with her than before. She had often, too, experienced much ill-humour from him. She had attained all she wished, so whatever she might lose in losing him, she felt herself relieved, and was capable of no other sentiment at first. The ennui and emptiness of her life afterwards made her feel regret. As for M. du Maine, the barbarous indecency of his joy need not be dwelt upon. The icy tranquillity of his brother, the Comte de Toulouse, neither increased nor diminished. Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans surprised me. I had expected some grief, I perceived only a few tears, which upon all occasions flowed very readily from her eyes, and which were soon dried up. Her bed, which she was very fond of, supplied what was wanting during several days, amidst obscurity which she by no means disliked.

But the window curtains were soon withdrawn and grief disappeared.

As for the Court, it was divided into two grand parties, the men hoping to figure, to obtain employ, to introduce themselves: and they were ravished to see the end of a reign under which they had nothing to hope for; the others; fatigued with a heavy yoke, always overwhelming, and of the ministers much more than of the King, were charmed to find themselves at liberty. Thus all, generally speaking, were glad to be delivered from continual restraint, and were eager for change.

Paris, tired of a dependence which had enslaved everything, breathed again in the hope of liberty, and with joy at seeing at an end the authority of so many people who abused it. The provinces in despair at their ruin and their annihilation breathed again and leaped for joy; and the Parliament and the robe destroyed by edicts and by revolutions, flattered themselves the first that they should figure, the other that they should find themselves free. The people ruined, overwhelmed, desperate, gave thanks to God, with a scandalous eclat, for a deliverance, their most ardent desires had not anticipated.

Foreigners delighted to be at last, after so many years, quit of a monarch who had so long imposed his law upon them, and who had escaped from them by a species of miracle at the very moment in which they counted upon having subjugated him, contained themselves with much more decency than the French. The marvels of the first three quarters of this reign of more than seventy years, and the personal magnanimity of this King until then so successful, and so abandoned afterwards by fortune during the last quarter of his reign—had justly dazzled them. They made it a point of honour to render to him after his death what they had constantly refused him during life. No foreign Court exulted: all plumed themselves upon praising and honouring his memory. The Emperor wore mourning as for a father, and although four or five months elapsed between the death of the King and the Carnival, all kinds of amusements were prohibited at Vienna during the Carnival, and the prohibition was strictly observed. A monstrous fact was, that towards the end of this period there was a single ball and a kind of fete that the Comte du Luc our own ambassador, was not ashamed to give to the ladies, who seduced him by the ennui of so dull a Carnival. This complaisance did not raise him in estimation at Vienna or elsewhere. In France people were contented with ignoring it.

As for our ministry and the intendants of the provinces, the financiers and what may be called the canaille, they felt all the extent of their loss. We shall see if the realm was right or wrong in the sentiments it held, and whether it found soon after that it had gained or lost.

To finish at once all that regards the King, let me here say, that his entrails were taken to Notre Dame, on the 4th of September, without any ceremony, by two almoners of the King, without accompaniment. On Friday, the 6th of September, the Cardinal de Rohan carried the heart to the Grand Jesuits, with very little accompaniment or pomp. Except the persons necessary for the ceremony, not half a dozen courtiers were present. It is not for me to comment upon this prompt ingratitude, I, who for fifty-two years have never once missed going to Saint-Denis on the anniversary of the death of Louis XIII., and have never seen a single person there on the same errand. On the 9th of September, the body of the late King was bur-

ied at Saint-Denis. The Bishop of Aleth pronounced the oration. Very little expense was gone to; and nobody was found who cared sufficiently for the late King to murmur at the economy. On Friday, the 25th of October, his solemn obsequies took place at Saint-Denis in a confusion, as to rank and precedence, without example. On Thursday, the 28th of November, the solemn obsequies were again performed, this time at Notre Dame, and with the usual ceremonies.

## CHAPTER LXXIX

The death of the King surprised M. le Duc d'Orleans in the midst of his idleness as though it had not been foreseen. He had made no progress in numberless arrangements, which I had suggested he should carry out; accordingly he was overwhelmed with orders to give, with things to settle, each more petty than the other, but all so provisional and so urgent that it happened as I had predicted, he had no time to think of anything important.

I learnt the death of the King upon awaking. Immediately after, I went to pay my respects to the new monarch. The first blood had already passed. I found myself almost alone. I went thence to M. le Duc d'Orleans, whom I found shut in, but all his apartments so full that a pin could not have fallen to the ground. I talked of the Convocation of the States-General, and reminded him of a promise he had given me, that he would allow the Dukes to keep their hats on when their votes were asked for; and I also mentioned various other promises he had made. All I could obtain from him was another promise, that when the public affairs of pressing moment awaiting attention were disposed of, we should have all we required. Several of the Dukes who had been witnesses of the engagement M. le Duc d'Orleans had made, were much vexed at this; but ultimately it was agreed that for the moment we would sacrifice our own particular interests to those of the State.

Between five and six the next morning a number of us met at the house of the Archbishop of Rheims at the end of the Pont Royal, behind the Hotel de Mailly, and there, in accordance with a resolution previously agreed upon, it was arranged that I should make a protest to the Parliament before the opening of the King's will there, against certain other usurpations, and state that it was solely because M. le Duc d'Orleans had given us his word that our complaints should be attended to as soon as the public affairs of the government were settled, that we postponed further measures upon this subject. It was past seven before our debate ended, and then we went straight to the Parliament.

We found it already assembled, and a few Dukes who had not attended our meeting, but had promised to be guided by us, were also present; and then a quarter of an hour after we were seated the bastards arrived. M. du Maine was bursting with joy; the term is strange, but his bearing cannot otherwise be described. The smiling and satisfied air prevailed over that of audacity and of confidence, which shone, nevertheless, and over politeness which seemed to struggle with them. He saluted right and left, and pierced everybody with his looks. His salutation to the Presidents had an air of rejoicing. To the peers he was serious, nay, respectful; the slowness, the lowness of his inclination, was eloquent. His head remained lowered even when he rose, so heavy is the weight of crime, even at the moment when nothing but triumph is expected. I rigidly followed him everywhere with my eyes, and I remarked that his salute was returned by the peers in a very dry and cold manner.

Scarcely were we re-seated than M. le Duc arrived, and the instant after M. le Duc d'Orleans. I allowed the stir that accompanied his appearance to subside a little, and then, seeing that the Chief-President was about to speak, I forestalled him, uncovered my head, and then covered it, and made my speech in the terms agreed upon. I concluded by appealing to M. le Duc d'Orleans to verify the truth of what I had said, in so far as it affected him.

The profound silence with which I was listened to showed the surprise of all present. M. le Duc d'Orleans uncovered himself, and in a low tone, and with an embarrassed manner, confirmed what I had said, then covered himself again.

Immediately afterwards I looked at M. du Maine, who appeared, to be well content at being let off so easily, and who, my neighbours said to me, appeared much troubled at my commencement.

A very short silence followed my protest, after which I saw the Chief-President say something in a low tone to M. le Duc d'Orleans, then arrange a deputation of the Parliament to go in search of the King's will, and its codicil, which had been put in the same place. Silence continued during this great and short period of expectation; every one looked at his neighbour without stirring. We were all upon the lower seats, the doors were supposed to be closed, but the grand chamber was filled with a large and inquisitive crowd. The