

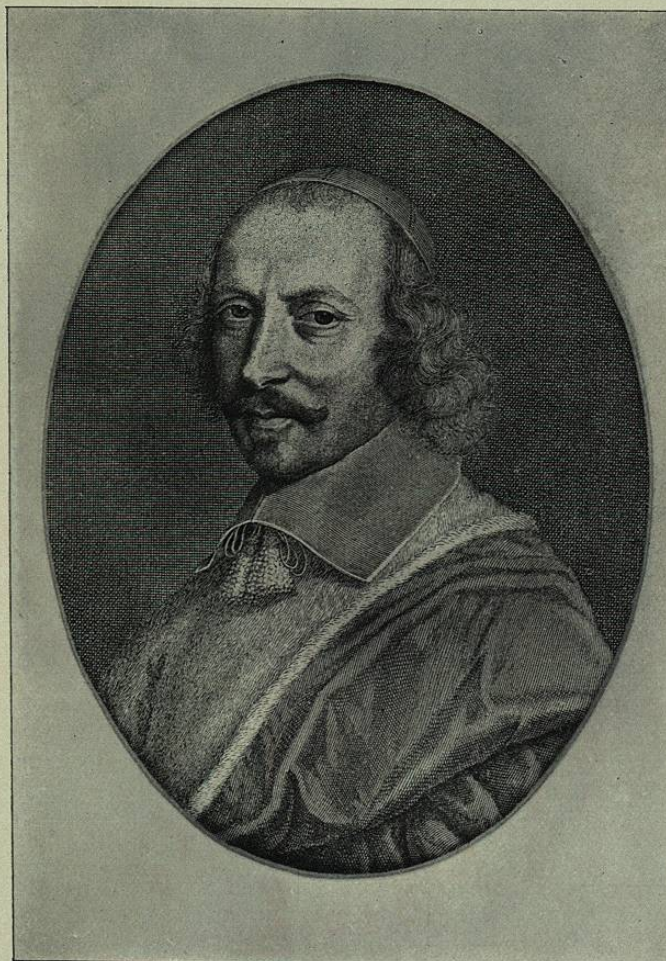
CHAPTER XLIX.

MINORITY OF LOUIS XIV. AND ADMINISTRATION OF
MAZARIN.

(1643-1661 A.D.)

Regency of Anne of Austria. — The eldest son of Louis XIII. was not yet five years old. His father, who distrusted the queen, had left the regency to her only on condition of having a council which should decide all questions by plurality of votes. Anne of Austria did not propose to accept tutors after having had masters so long; she flattered the Parliament; "she would be always very glad," she said, "to make use of the counsels of so august a body"; at the same time she demanded that they should annul the last wishes of her husband. Parliament, delighted to be able to return to political life by means of this tempting opportunity, at once set aside the will of the king. Anne of Austria was proclaimed regent "with power to choose such persons as she might approve, to deliberate on the affairs which should be presented to her." To the astonishment of the court, her first choice was Cardinal Mazarin, the friend and successor of Richelieu.

Mazarin. — Mazarin was born in 1602, and belonged to an old Sicilian family which had settled in Rome. Being sent as nuncio to France (1634), he had attracted the notice of Richelieu, who attached him to himself and obtained for him the cardinal's hat (1641). The queen reposed implicit confidence in him. "He had a strong, foreseeing, inventive mind, plain good sense, a character more supple than weak, and less strong than persevering. He was guided not by likes or dislikes, but by his calculations. Ambition had raised him above vanity. He had a rare insight into the characters of men, but he allowed his own judgment to be influenced by the estimation which life had already won for them. Before granting his confidence to any one he demanded that he should have shown the wit which plans good fortune, and the strength of character which masters



MAZARIN.

From a print in the National Library.

it. He was incapable of despondency, and was remarkably constant in spite of his apparent changeableness" (Mignet).

Cabal of the Importants. — Meanwhile all those who had suffered with the queen had come together and, believing themselves already masters of the State, affected airs of superiority which caused the name Importants to be given to their party. Prominent among them were the Duke of Vendôme, legitimized son of Henry IV. and Gabrielle d'Estrées; his two sons, the dukes of Merceœur and Beaufort, and the young and brilliant Duke of La Rochefoucauld. The question now was how to undo the work of Richelieu; the Importants made no attempt to conceal this; they declared openly that it was necessary to restore to the nobles all that Louis XIII. had taken from them: but the queen had become avaricious of power since she had had it in her own hands. If she had not desired to share it with wise counsellors, still less was she willing to give it into the hands of blunderers who had begun plotting again and would soon stir up a civil war. The discovery of an attempt to assassinate Mazarin decided her to banish them all from the court. The Importants had ruled but three months.

Thirty Years' War continued; Victories of Condé and Turenne. — The death of Richelieu had emboldened the Spaniards; they resumed the offensive, and besieged Rocroi, hoping to reach Paris without other obstacle, for they had before them only an army inferior in numbers and a general twenty-one years old, Louis of Bourbon, then Duke of Enghien, afterwards the great Condé. The armies met May 19th, 1643. Condé, at the head of his right wing, routed the cavalry which was placed opposite him, passed boldly behind the Spanish line, so as to surprise the victorious right of the enemy, and routed them. He turned then upon the Spanish infantry, surrounded them, attacked them three times, and broke their line.

The Duke of Enghien followed up this victory with impetuosity and daring. Each year was marked by a victory. The Spaniards being driven out of France, he turned against Austria and her German allies. The army first led by Bernhard of Weimar had just lost its skilful general, Guébriant, and, ill following several generals at once, had been surprised by the Imperialists at Tuttlingen, in cantonments too widely separated. Turenne, being appointed

marshal, gathered together the shattered force and reorganized it. Condé joined him with ten thousand. They attacked the Bavarian general, Mercy, under the walls of Freiburg-im-Breisgau. This was rather a frightful massacre than a victory; but it permitted the two generals to seize Philippsburg, Worms, and Mainz, and thus to clear the enemy from the banks of the Rhine.

While Condé was returning to Paris, Turenne was defeated at Marienthal by Mercy (1645). The Duke of Enghien hastened up with re-enforcements, drove back the enemy, penetrated into Bavaria, and put to rout the entire imperial army in the bloody battle of Nördlingen, where Mercy was killed (1645). In 1646 he besieged Dunkirk, and was the first to win that place for France. The following year he went to Catalonia and besieged Lérida, but was repulsed (1647). This was his first defeat; he repaired his fortunes in another field. In the north the archduke Leopold, the brother of the emperor, had advanced as far as Sens, in Artois; Condé attacked them with his usual vigor, and in two hours the battle was won (1648). Turenne, in Germany, in conjunction with the Swedes, won the battles of Lauingen and Zusmarshausen (1648); drove the aged elector of Bavaria from his states, and but for a tremendous rain which suddenly swelled the waters of the Inn, would have marched on Vienna.

Treaties of Westphalia (1648).— Negotiations had for some time been going on. Proposed in 1641, the conference began in 1643, at two cities of Westphalia, Münster and Osnabrück. The problem to be solved was, to rearrange the map of Europe after a war which had lasted thirty years, to give a new constitution to the Empire, and to regulate the public and religious rights of several Christian nations. At the last moment Spain withdrew. The other states signed the peace, October, 1648.

In the Thirty Years' War Austria had endeavored to crush out the religious and political liberties of Germany; Austria being conquered, the Protestants received full liberty of conscience, and the imperial authority, but lately so threatening, was annulled; the princes and the German states were confirmed in the entire and complete exercise of sovereignty within their own states, including the right to make foreign alliances. Sweden received the island of Rügen, Wismar, Hither Pomerania with Stettin, the arch-

bishopric of Bremen, and the bishopric of Verden, that is to say, the mouths of the three great German rivers, the Oder, the Elbe, and the Weser, with five millions of crowns, and three votes in the diet.

France continued to occupy Lorraine. She obtained from the Empire a renunciation of all rights to the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which she had been holding for a century; to the city of Pinerolo, to Alsace with the exception of Strassburg, thus carrying her frontier to the Rhine. She also received Alt-Breisach on the right bank, and the right to garrison Philippsburg. These were great advantages, for Alsace covered Lorraine and Franche-Comté, so that their restoration to France would be only a question of time. By causing the right of the German states to contract alliances with foreign powers to be recognized, France secured for herself a permanent opportunity to buy up these indigent princes, while by guaranteeing the execution of the treaty she secured the right to interfere on all occasions in the affairs of Germany. The Empire was henceforth only a sort of confederation of three hundred and sixty states, Lutheran and Catholic, monarchical and republican, lay and ecclesiastical. The treaties of Westphalia put an end to the supremacy of the house of Austria. But the Bourbons inherited the ambition of the Hapsburgs, and roused against themselves similar coalitions.

Internal Government from 1643 to 1661.— While Mazarin was thus gloriously carrying out the policy of Richelieu, his power in France was shaken by factions. The last reign had bequeathed great financial embarrassments to Cardinal Mazarin, who increased them by his bad management; he needed a great deal of money to carry on the foreign war, to bribe the nobles by pensioning them, and also to satisfy his own scandalous avarice. The superintendent, Émeri, was also an Italian, and unpopular, as were all ministers of finance in those times. He resorted to burdensome and vexatious expedients: he borrowed money at twenty-five per cent; he created offices which he sold, reduced the payments to the state annuitants, kept back a portion of the salaries of public officers, revived obsolete ordinances in order to enforce heavier fines, and insisted upon extreme rigor in the collection of taxes. The end was universal bankruptcy. The Fronde was evolved from this financial crisis and extreme distress.

Opposition of Parliament to the Royal Authority. — By the establishment of the *paulette*, judicial offices had become a hereditary property, perfectly safe, and attended with high and deserved esteem. The magistrates had acquired by this security and consideration a spirit of proud independence which made Parliament a centre of opposition, where, if necessary, national traditions and monarchical principles were earnestly defended. The financial exactions of the superintendent gave it an excellent pretext for speaking out while appearing to speak in the interest of the people. New edicts led to the beginning of a revolt. Beside themselves with the popularity they had won by their persistent opposition to the ministry, the magistrates imagined themselves to occupy the position of the States-General, and emulated the Parliament of England, which at that time was conducting a revolution; and in May, 1648, the members of the four sovereign courts, the Parliament, the chamber of accounts, the *cour des aides*, and the great council, came together in the hall of St. Louis in the palace of justice, "to serve the interest of the public and of individuals, and to reform the abuses of the State."

The prime minister decided at first to annul the decree of their union; then, changing his mind, — for the situation appeared dangerous, — he authorized the deliberations of the joint assembly, which undertook to give a new constitution to France. The assembly actually offered twenty-seven articles for the royal sanction, so as to make them the fundamental law of the monarchy. Some of their demands were excellent, others less useful, and most of them impracticable. The most important provided that in the future the taxes could not be legally collected unless they had been discussed and registered, "with liberty of suffrage," by the Parliament of Paris. This was giving a part of the legislative authority to an aristocracy of two hundred magistrates who bought their offices. Another of their reforms would have been a direct attack upon the administrative centralization instituted by Richelieu, by abolishing the office of the intendants of provinces. The "companies" were better inspired when they demanded substantial securities for the liberty of the subject, the suppression of *lettres de cachet*, of extraordinary tribunals, and the institution of something resembling *habeas corpus*.

Day of Barricades (Aug. 26, 1648); **Mathieu Molé**; the

Coadjutor De Retz. — At this time, encouraged by the victory of Sens, the cardinal resolved to seize three of the most obstinate magistrates, — Blancménénil, Charton, and Broussel. He mistakenly believed that he should make a great impression upon the people by causing them to be arrested at midday, just as the Te Deum was being sung in Notre-Dame for the victory of Sens, and the Swiss guards were bringing into the church sixty-three flags taken from the enemy. Charton escaped, Blancménénil was taken without any difficulty, but an old servant of Broussel aroused the people; the shops were closed, the heavy iron chains which were at the entrance to the principal streets were stretched across, and four hundred thousand voices cried at once, "Liberty and Broussel!" (Aug. 26, 1648). Two hundred barricades were thrown up in a moment; they were extended up to within a hundred paces of the Palais-Royal.

Next day the Parliament in a body went on foot over the barricades, which they were permitted to pass, to demand of the queen their imprisoned members, but could not obtain them. On their return they were stopped by the infuriated populace. The intrepid first president, Mathieu Molé, calmed the crowd by the dignity of his demeanor and returned once more to the palace. The disturbance increased. The magistrates attempted to make another application to Anne of Austria; and Queen Henrietta Maria of England persuaded her at last to grant it. Quiet was at once restored. In October the edict of St. Germain sanctioned all the demands of the "chamber of St. Louis."

The coadjutor of Paris, Paul de Gondi, who had taken a prominent part in the victorious insurrection, was descended from a Florentine family. When young he had formed a plot against Richelieu, and had made a special study of conspiracies. It was with such a turn of mind that he entered the Church. In 1643 he was appointed coadjutor of his uncle, the archbishop of Paris; but he aspired to a much higher position. He aimed to play the part of Richelieu, and made use of his office only to gain popularity in Paris. He believed he had in him the elements of a great man; time proved him to be only a blunderer.

War of the Fronde; Parliament and the Nobles (January–April, 1649). — The prime minister had yielded only to gain time; he resolved to settle with these factions when he had got rid of the foreign war. In February, 1649, Anne of

Austria left Paris with her children and assembled some troops about her. Parliament, unable to struggle alone against the court, demanded or accepted the services of some princes and young lords, who could afford to amuse themselves with civil war. These were the prince of Conti, brother of the great Condé, the Duke of Longueville, who had married their sister, the Duke of Bouillon, the Duke of La Rochefoucauld, and even the wise Turenne. The coadjutor was the ruling spirit of the plot; as figure-head he used a grandson of Henry IV., the Duke of Beaufort, a prince possessing little wit, but much courage. Gondi also endeavored to enlist Condé, but he proudly refused. The struggle which then began deserves the name which history has bestowed upon it, that of a child's plaything, the Fronde (sling).

"The queen, with tears in her eyes, implored the prince of Condé to act as protector to the king, and the victor of Rocroi, Freiburg, Nördlingen, and Sens could not turn his back upon so many past services. Parliament, nevertheless, dared to sustain the war. Each member taxed himself in order to raise troops. The great chamber, the chamber of inquests, the chamber of requests, the chamber of accounts, the *cour des aides*, which had so often cried out against slight and necessary taxation, raised a sum of almost ten millions for the ruin of the country. Twelve thousand men were levied by decree of Parliament. Every owner of a *porte-cochère* had to furnish a man and a horse; the cavalry was called the cavalry of the *porte-cochères*. . . . No one knew why he was in arms. . . . Everything was turned into jest. . . . Parisian troops who went out from Paris, and always returned whipped, were received with hisses and shouts of laughter. All their small losses were repaired by couplets and epigrams. The public-houses were the tents where they held councils of war in the midst of jests, songs, and the most dissolute merry-making" (Voltaire).

It is not necessary, however, to represent the Fronde as more insignificant than it really was. It was well known why the people took up arms. A universal bankruptcy had lately crushed all hearts and fortunes; they wished to arise from this fallen condition. In order to accomplish a revolution, it is not only necessary that there should be reasons for change; there should also be men capable of making the change; and in 1648 no one took any interest in the public

welfare. The princes regretted their places in the council; the nobles their lost power; the Parliament wished to play the same game which was being played by the Parliament of England on the other side of the Channel, and the people, who saw in all this only a means for a decrease of taxation, followed in the wake of the princes, the magistrates, and their archbishop. The latter expected that the reaction against the system of Richelieu would surely bear him into power. Men were not going at haphazard; therefore the ridiculousness of the Fronde does not consist in the vanity of its proposals, but in the disorder of its antagonistic ambitions, and also in the impossibility of its success.

The magistrates were the first to desire to withdraw from the squabble. The "gentlemen of the robe" had more love for the country than the soldiers. The news of a treaty with Spain signed by the nobles, brought Parliament to a decision; the first president was appointed to treat with Mazarin. The convention of Rueil lowered some of the taxes, authorized the assemblies of the chambers, and brought the court back to Paris (April, 1649).

The Petits-Maitres, or Young Fronde; Arrest of Condé (January, 1650). — The peace, though dearly bought, was of short duration. Condé desired to rule the government which he had protected. He wearied the regent and the prime minister by his continual demands, and humiliated them by his insolence. Meantime he caused the old Frondeurs to become discontented; he spoke constantly with scorn of those bourgeois who presumed to govern the state; he surrounded himself with vain and presumptuous young lords, who reproduced in an extreme degree the defects of their chief and were called in consequence the *petit maitres* (little masters). Mazarin had little difficulty in uniting all the people against him; and had him arrested in the Louvre, with his brother Conti and his brother-in-law Longueville (January, 1650). The populace rejoiced; the old democratic leaven of the great city began to ferment. "Let us recognize the fact," said a pamphlet of the time, "that the great are great only because we carry them on our shoulders."

Union of the Two Frondes; Exile of Mazarin (January, 1651). — Insurrections broke out in some of the provinces, but were quickly repressed. But Mazarin had promised the cardinal's hat to the coadjutor, in order to attach him to the

interests of the queen; after the affair was over he forgot his promise. The coadjutor entered into alliance with the party of Condé, revived the dissatisfactions of Parliament, and stirred up the people; and the two Frondes, for the time united under his influence, obliged Anne of Austria to deliver up the princes and to send her prime minister out of the kingdom. Mazarin retired to Cologne, and in his exile continued to govern the queen of France (February, 1651). De Retz had finally obtained the hat; but the union of the two Frondes was of short duration.

Revolt of Condé; Battle of Bléneau (April, 1652). — Condé was dissatisfied with everything; with the Parliament, with Paris, and with the court. He had fancied that the queen would grant him the entire control of affairs as a compensation for his thirteen months of captivity, and yet Mazarin was governing from his place of exile. Irritated by the isolation to which he was abandoned, he undertook more criminal designs. He set out for the south, resolved to acquire supreme power by force of arms. While he was urging Guienne to insurrection and treating with Spain, his friends were preparing for war in the heart of France. Mazarin at once returned to France (December, 1651), and gave the command of the troops to the viscount of Turenne, reattached to the royal cause. The marshal advanced to the Loire. Condé most unexpectedly appeared and attacked him; but Turenne, with only four thousand men against twelve thousand, prevented the enemy from following up their advantage.

Battle of the Faubourg Saint Antoine (July, 1652). — Which side would Paris take? The armies advanced to demand an answer from the Parisians themselves; they refused to allow either of the parties then facing each other in the Faubourg Saint Antoine to enter Paris. The battle was bloody and for a long time undecided. The Duke of Orleans, the cardinal De Retz, the Parliament, the queen, were awaiting the result. Condé fought like a soldier. But the army of the Fronde, threatened on its flanks, was about to be surrounded and destroyed, when Mademoiselle, the daughter of Gaston of Orleans, caused the gates to be opened to Condé, and turned the cannon of the Bastille upon the royal troops. Turenne withdrew in astonishment. Condé soon left the city and retired to the Spaniards in Flanders. A large number of nobles followed him thither, taking with them almost an army.

Return of Mazarin (February, 1653). — This emigration was fatal to those that took part in it. It accelerated the movement of public opinion, which had turned in the direction of the king; Mazarin, in order to present no obstacle to it, withdrew a second time. Then the Parliament and the citizens implored the queen-mother to return to the now peaceful capital. Ten magistrates were deprived of their offices or imprisoned; the cardinal De Retz was shut up in Vincennes, the prince of Condé condemned to death in default of appearance, and Gaston exiled to Blois. Three months after, Mazarin returned in full power (February, 1653). This was the end of the Fronde. But these events left an ineffaceable impression on the mind of Louis XIV. The remembrance of them contributed to develop in him the most absolute ideas of government. Upon returning to Paris, he authorized the registration (October, 1652) of a declaration "very expressly *forbidding* the members of Parliament thenceforth to take any part in the general affairs of State, and in the direction of finances." Two more very heavy blows were dealt against Parliament: a statute providing that the decrees of the council of State should be obligatory upon the "sovereign courts," and the re-establishment (1655) of intendants in the provinces. And thus the revolution attempted by the parliamentary aristocracy miscarried.

Victories of Turenne at Arras and at the Dunes; Alliance of France with Cromwell. — The war of the Fronde was ended. It remained to finish the war with Spain, which during these disturbances had recaptured Dunkirk, and Casale in Italy. Condé put at the service of the same enemy the sword which had once been so fatal to them; but he seemed to have lost his strength on leaving France. He went first with the Archduke Leopold to besiege Arras. Turenne attacked them in their camp and forced their lines. Condé could do nothing but retreat in good order.

The years 1655 and 1656 were occupied in besieging places on the frontier, and in skilful manœuvres on the part of Turenne and Condé; but with the small army they had under their control they could strike no decisive blows. Mazarin had no more royalist scruples than Richelieu had had of religious scruples. His predecessor had formed an alliance with the Protestants against Austria; he formed an alliance with Cromwell (1657) against Spain. Hence-

forth Spain experienced only reverses. While the English were seizing upon Jamaica, and burning the galleys of Cadiz, Dunkirk, the key of Flanders, was besieged by land and sea. The Spaniards advanced along the dunes which bordered the sea, in order to assist them. Turenne gained a complete victory over them (June, 1658): Dunkirk, which he acquired by it, was restored to the English.

Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659); League of the Rhine (1658). — The cabinet of Madrid had no more armies; it asked for peace. Negotiations were conducted by the two ministers, Mazarin and Don Luis de Haro, who met on an island in the Bidassoa, at the frontier of the two countries. The result was the treaty of the Pyrenees (1659). France retained Artois, Cerdania, Roussillon, and Lorraine; the prince of Condé was re-established in his principal offices; and finally Louis XIV. married the infanta Maria Theresa, who was to bring him a dowry of three hundred thousand gold crowns, in consideration of which the princess renounced all pretension to the throne of her father. Mazarin arranged it so that the renunciation should be legally null; he expressly made it dependent upon the exact payment of the dowry, which he knew the Spaniards would never be able to pay. Thus he paved the way for the future claims of the house of Bourbon. By this same treaty Mazarin abandoned Portugal, which, having no longer the support of France, sought that of England. In 1658 Mazarin concluded the league of the Rhine, by which the three ecclesiastical electors, the Duke of Bavaria, the princes of Brunswick and Hesse, the kings of Sweden and Denmark, formed an alliance with France for the maintenance of the treaties of Westphalia, and placed themselves after a fashion under his protection.

Internal Administration of Mazarin. — However great as a diplomatist, Mazarin did not show himself a great minister. His internal administration was deplorable. He neglected commerce and agriculture; he allowed the navy to dwindle away, and managed the finances in such a way that at his death the public treasury owed 430,000,000, while his private fortune amounted to 100,000,000, which would be equivalent to three or four times as much at the present time. Mazarin was a very kind relative; he prevented the marriage of one of his nieces to Louis XIV., but he placed them all in advantageous positions. His oldest sister lived

to see one of her daughters Princess of Conti; the other, Duchess of Modena. The five daughters of his other sister were married to the Duke of Merceœur, the Count of Soissons, the Roman constable Colonna, the Duke of Bouillon, and the Duke of La Meilleraye. France paid all of these dowries. His nephew was made Duke of Nivernais, and his brother, a poor monk buried in the seclusion of an Italian convent, was made archbishop of Aix and a cardinal.

A few pensions to men of letters cannot be regarded as an offset to all this plunder, nor the expenses borne in establishing a magnificent library (the Mazarin) which at a late time was opened to the public, nor the foundation of the college of the Four Nations. Mazarin had a very great love of the arts, though perhaps not the best taste in respect to them; he brought from Italy a number of pictures, statues, and curiosities, even actors and machinists, who introduced the opera into France; he formed, in 1655, the academy of painting and sculpture. He died at Vincennes, March 9th, 1661, at the age of fifty-nine, in despair at leaving his beautiful paintings, his statues, his books, affairs, and life; and for all that "facing death becomingly."