THIRTEENTH PERIOD.

TRIUMPH OF ABSOLUTE MONARCHY (1661–1715).

CHAPTER L.

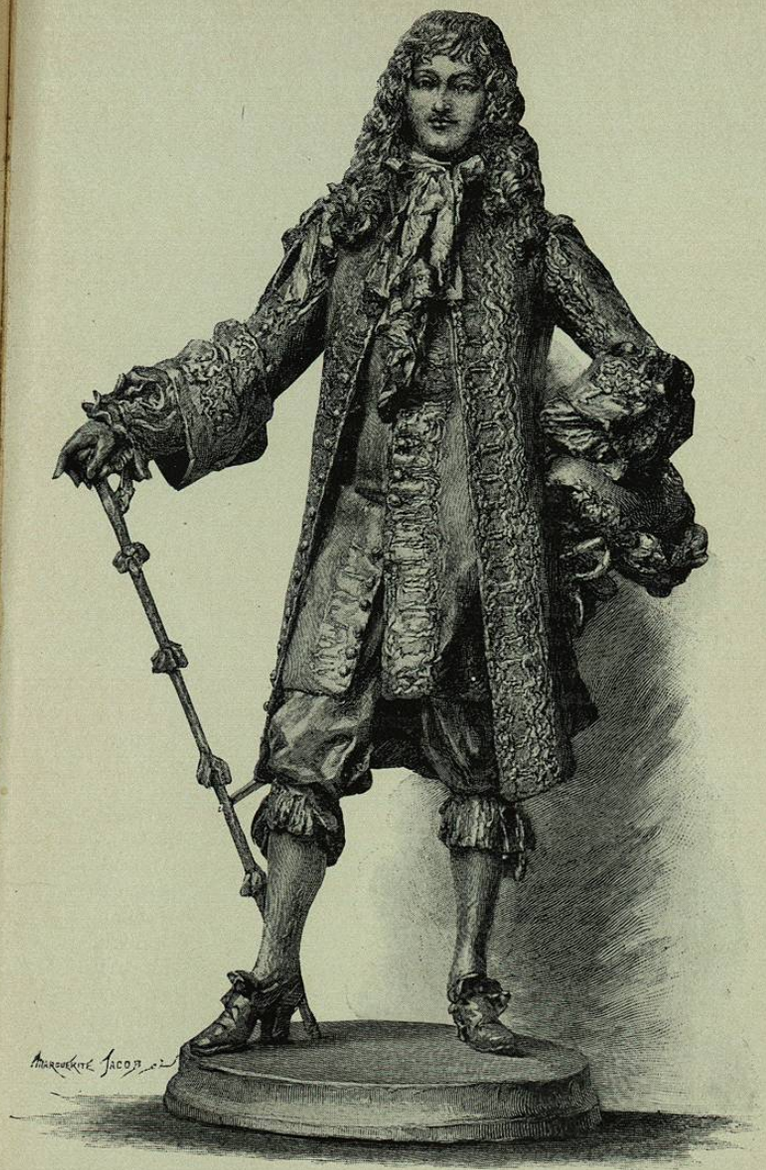
LOUIS XIV. — INTERNAL ORGANIZATION. — COLBERT; LOUVOIS; VAUBAN.

(1661–1683 A.D.)

Division of the Reign of Louis XIV. — Charles V. used to say that fortune was no friend to old men. The greatest king of the Bourbon race had the same experience. Long reigns, indeed, often present two contradictory aspects; one season of splendor and prosperity, another of downfall and misery, because few princes are sufficiently masters of themselves to be able to modify their own ideas according to the changes in the needs of the people.

The brilliant period of the reign of Louis XIV. extends from 1661 to 1683, from the death of Mazarin to the death of Colbert, and is filled with those stormy characters which the preceding years had produced: for example, in internal administration, Colbert; in war, Turenne, Condé, Duquesne, and Louvois; in letters, Molière, La Fontaine, Boileau, Racine, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Madame Sévigné; in art, Lebrun, Claude Lorraine, Puget, Hardouin-Mansard, and Perrault. Then the king was successful in everything; permanent conquests were made, great works were accomplished, splendid monuments erected.

After 1683 Louis XIV., who was then advanced in life, became delicate: Louvois, who had no longer the useful counterpoise of Colbert, and Madame de Maintenon, ruled the monarch. Joy and happiness departed with his young



LOUIS XIV. IN HIS YOUTH.
From the statuette of Chapu.

years. The great men passed away and were replaced by a weaker race. Louis remained alone, the last of his generation, and went to his grave, sad and conquered, leaving France without industry, without commerce, exhausted, and cursing the great reign which she had for twenty-five years greeted with enthusiastic acclamations.

Louis XIV. assumes Sole Charge of the Government. — In 1661 Louis XIV. was twenty-three years old, and had reigned eighteen years without becoming known. Mazarin alone had understood him. He said, "There is stuff enough in him to make four kings and an honest man." Mazarin's correspondence attests the constant efforts made by the cardinal to prepare his pupil to take the direction of affairs. When the ministers came, after his death, to ask the king to whom they should report in the future, "To me," was his answer. He accepted all the cares of royalty; he was, said La Bruyère, his own prime minister, and demanded that the principal functionaries should correspond directly with him. For thirty years he worked regularly eight hours a day. He recommended his son, in truly eloquent words, not to forget "that it is necessary to reign by working; that it is ingratitude and insolence to God, and injustice and tyranny to men, to wish to do one without the other."

Ideas of Louis XIV. on Government. — The young prince had already conceived the whole plan of his policy. Louis XIV. was the first to establish in France the theory of absolute monarchy. In his eyes royalty was a divine institution; sovereigns were the representatives of God upon earth, and on this account participated in his power and infallibility. Louis not only believed himself to be the master of his subjects; he regarded himself, according to feudal ideas, as the proprietor of their estates — a monstrous doctrine which carries us back to the midst of the Oriental monarchies. Yet it seemed to him that this authority, to which he recognized no limits but those imposed by religion and his own conscience, ought never to remain inactive. He believed that kings had imperious duties to fulfil. "We ought," said he, "to consider the welfare of our subjects rather than our own; we should make laws with a view solely to their advantage; and the power we have over them should only make us work the more effectually for their happiness."

It was thus that Louis XIV. conceived of the profession of king: let us see how he reigned.

The Councils. — The upper council, into which the king called the secretaries of State and sometimes the princes of the blood, corresponded to the present council of ministers; it had the general direction of policy and of important affairs; it also decided appeals from the council of State.

The council of State, or king's council, was the great administrative body of the kingdom. It met four times a week, under the presidency of the chancellor, each time to attend to affairs of a different nature. For instance, the Monday council read and discussed reports addressed to ministers by the governors of provinces; this was the *council of despatches*. On Wednesday the *council of finances* was held; it deliberated upon new levies of taxes, made up the schedule of the *taille*, or real estate and personal tax. Friday was the day for the examination of complaints of private individuals or royal officers against the tax-farmers and the collectors, and for the adjudication of leases of taxation. On Saturday the *council of parties* decided conflicts of jurisdiction between tribunals, and interpreted the royal ordinances. The councillors of State were eighteen in number.

The Grand Council had control of all proceedings concerning bishoprics and benefices in the gift of the king; it decided cases evoked from the sovereign courts, and contradictory decrees passed by different parliaments.

Ministers. — The king's clerks became, in 1547, secretaries of State; they were four in number; each of them administrated, not a certain class of affairs, but all the affairs of certain provinces: they divided France among themselves geographically. It was an impracticable form of organization. In 1619 one among them was put in charge of war matters; in 1626 another received charge of foreign affairs; and finally, under Louis XIV., the ministry of the king's household and of ecclesiastical affairs and that of marine affairs were instituted. The offices of chancellor, or keeper of the seals, the head of the magistracy, and that of comptroller of the finances composed virtually two other ministries.

The Ministers of Louis XIV. — The ministers that Mazarin had left him were Pierre Séguier, keeper of the seals and chancellor; Michel le Tellier, secretary of war; Hugues de Lionne, in charge of marine affairs until 1669, and of foreign affairs; Nicolas Foucquet, superintendent of finances. The first two were distinguished men; the third was a man above the average; the fourth, Foucquet, was a noble patron of letters, but he had brought, or rather continued, the finances in a condition of extreme disorder, and he helped himself without scruple from the treasury. He increased the inventories of expenses which were shown to the king, and diminished the lists of receipts; and finally, what was more reprehensible, he seemed to be always trying to fortify his position to provide against the case of disgrace. But the king had a private minister who informed him every day of the superintendent's deceptions; this was Jean-Baptiste Colbert, born at Rheims in 1619, of an old family of merchants and magistrates, an intendant under Mazarin, who had recommended him to the king. At a magnificent festival which Foucquet gave in honor of the king, Louis was offended by the ostentatious device which he read in every thing, "Quo non ascendam?" and by all the appointments of the entertainment, which were truly regal. A few weeks after, Foucquet was in the Bastile. He was accused of wasteful management, which was very just, and of a plot against the State which was never proved. At the end of three years nine judges pronounced him deserving of death, and thirteen of banishment. The king changed the sentence to perpetual imprisonment, and Foucquet was shut up in the fortress of Pinerolo, where he died after nineteen years of captivity. Colbert succeeded Foucquet, with the title of comptroller-general. In 1666 Michel le Tellier gave his office to his son, the celebrated Louvois: the principal ministries of Louis XIV. were then filled up.

Colbert. — Colbert did the work of about five of the present ministries; that of the king's household, with the fine arts, that of finances, that of agriculture, including commerce, that of public works, and after 1669, that of marine; an overwhelming task, which, however, did not crush him. "Jean-Baptiste Colbert," says a contemporary, "had a stern countenance, but upon acquaintance he proved easy of access, expeditious, and perfectly reliable. He was of the opinion that good faith is the most solid foundation of affairs. Possessing a strong though heavy mind, adapted mainly for calculation, he cleared up all the confusion in which the superintendents and clerks of the treasury had involved affairs in order that they might fish in troubled waters."

Reorganization of the Finances. — The finances had now fallen back into the chaos from which Sully had extricated them. The public debt was 430,000,000, the revenues were consumed two years in advance, and of the 84,000,000 of annual taxes, scarcely 35,000,000 went into the treasury. Colbert began by punishing the malversations committed for twenty-five years by the officers of finance. The farmers of the revenues, who had taken advantage of the needs of the State to lend to it at usurious rates, were made to disgorge: the fines amounted to 110,000,000. These measures suited the spirit of the times, but were not in accordance with wise policy; the surest plan by which a state can secure itself against having to make disadvantageous terms in days of adversity is always to abide by its plighted word in days of prosperity.

Colbert was the institutor of the budget. Until then money had been paid out indiscriminately, without having regard to the receipts of the treasury. He was the first to draw up each year a statement in which the probable revenues and expenses were estimated in advance. When a secretary of State had to make an expenditure of money, he signed a special order for the payment; the receiving party presented it to the comptroller-general, who assigned the payment of the sum to a special fund, and presented the assignment to the king for his signature.

Colbert modified the form and assessment of taxes. The *taille*, or land-tax, was *personal;* that is, paid by all commoners. He desired to make it *real;* that is, payable by the landed property, no matter who might be the owners. It amounted, in 1661, to 53,000,000; he reduced it to 32,000,000. In the midst of the troubles of the Fronde many persons had assumed titles of nobility or bought them. A royal ordinance revoked all patents of nobility granted during the past thirty years, and forty thousand wealthy families thus became again subject to taxation, which, of course, lightened the burdens of their neighbors. The comptroller-general very reasonably preferred the *aides*, or indirect taxes, to the *taille*, but he increased or created taxes on coffee, tobacco, wines, cards, lotteries, etc., and from 1,500,000 francs, increased them to 21,000,000.

He did not approve of loans; not that he did not appreciate the advantage of borrowing at a low rate in order to discharge burdensome debts, but he doubted the expediency

of giving Louis XIV. the opportunity to burden the future for the benefit of the present.

The following is a summary of the financial administration of Colbert: in 1661, out of 84,000,000 livres of taxes the treasurer had to pay 52,000,000 for annuities and salaries; only 32,000,000 remained, and 60,000,000 were paid out; deficit, 28,000,000. In 1683, the year in which Colbert died, the taxes amounted to 112,000,000, in spite of a reduction of 22,000,000 on the *taille;* salaries and annuities now required only 28,000,000; the net revenue of the treasury was 89,000,000. Thus, on the one hand, Colbert had increased the receipts by 28,000,000, diminished the annuities and salaries 29,000,000, which constituted an annual net saving to the State of 57,000,000; while on the other, he had relieved the common people of 22,000,000, by reducing the *taille* in the same proportion. The figures speak for themselves.

Agriculture. — Sully had sacrificed industry to agriculture; Colbert did not sacrifice agriculture to industry, as has often been said. He relieved it of taxes which oppressed it; he forbade again the seizure of animals and implements of labor in the collection of taxes due the State; he encouraged the improvement of live-stock, and ordered the draining of marshes. But he made a mistake in being influenced by that popular prejudice which regarded free trade in grain as a promoter of scarcity. Colbert succeeded in reducing the price of wheat for manufacturers and soldiers; but the farmers, not finding it profitable, ceased in many districts to raise it at all.

Industry. — Industry was still in its infancy; the French imported almost everything. Colbert, coming as he did from the shop of a merchant of Rheims, determined that France should be able to furnish her own supplies. He organized the protective system, injurious to a matured industry, but indispensable to a growing one. This was, in his eyes, only a temporary measure, which would suffice to make it unnecessary for the kingdom to obtain any necessities from foreigners.

Thanks to the fact that Colbert spared no expense in buying or obtaining, by means fair or foul, the industrial secrets of neighboring nations, and attracting the most skilful workmen to France, the number of manufactures increased rapidly. He sustained them by subsidies wisely distributed.

He obtained from the Church the suppression of seventeen holidays. In order to increase the number of workers, he endeavored to reduce the number of monks, and to postpone the age when they should be permitted to take religious vows. The result was that in a short time the French cloths had no rivals in Europe; tin, steel, porcelain, morocco leather, which had always been imported, were manufactured in France; the linens and serges of Holland, the laces and velvets of Genoa, the carpets of Persia and Turkey, were not only imitated, but equalled; the rich stuffs in which gold and silver were mingled with silk were fabricated at Tours and at Lyons; finer glass was made at Tour-la-Ville and at Paris than at Venice; the tapestries of Flanders were surpassed by those of the Gobelins.

It is worthy of remark that Colbert imprinted upon French industry the stamp which it has borne ever since. He seemed to have foreseen the position which France should occupy in the industrial world by employing keen intelligence and delicate taste in the manufacture of the most important articles. It was under the influence of this foresight that the manufacture of the Gobelin tapestries was organized, that it might be a model school where art and industry should join hands.

Internal Commerce; Public Works. — Colbert desired to have only one line of custom-houses, on the frontier, but each province was surrounded by them. He reduced their number, however, and suppressed them in the case of twelve provinces. He encouraged the exportation of wines and brandies, and declared Dunkirk, Bayonne, and Marseilles free ports. He established bonded warehouses in the French ports, where, in case of re-exportation, duties already paid should be refunded, granted a free passage for foreign merchandise through all the provinces, repaired the high roads, which had become impassable, and constructed new ones. Finally, he projected the canal of Burgundy, ordered the construction of that of Orleans, and dug that of Languedoc, which united the Mediterranean Sea and the ocean. The port of Cette was built at one of its extremities; Toulouse was at the other, and from Toulouse the Garonne formed an open road to Bordeaux and the ocean. This work, gigantic for that period, was commenced in 1664, and continued without interruption until 1681.

Commerce, thus assisted, developed rapidly. In order to regulate and enlighten this new activity, Colbert re-established, in 1665, the council of commerce, instituted by Henry IV. Louis XIV. presided over it regularly every fortnight. Similar councils, established in the provinces, were "to assemble every year, and choose deputies who should present their requests to the minister."

Maritime Commerce and Colonies. — Foreigners had engrossed all the maritime commerce, even the coasting trade. Of twenty-five thousand ships in Europe, the Dutch had fifteen or sixteen thousand, and the French, at most, only five or six hundred. Foucquet had established anchorage-dues of fifty sous (six or seven francs) a ton on foreign ships, payable on entering and leaving French ports. Colbert retained this duty, which was for the French marine almost what the navigation act has been for the English. He granted to national ships bounties on exportations and importations; and encouraged the builders of ships intended for oceanic navigation, by other bounties, so that the merchant marine, stimulated and protected, developed rapidly.

But the English and Dutch had still the advantage of the French in having a larger experience, assured markets for sales, markets of purchase which they had frequented for a century, and immense capital which enabled them to dare and risk more. Colbert, in order to compete with them, substituted privileged associations for the efforts of isolated individuals. He established five great companies on the model of the Dutch and English companies, — those of the East and West Indies, the North, the Levant, and Senegal. He granted them the exclusive monopoly of trade with these distant coasts, and also bounties, and made them considerable advances.

He tried to restore life to the colonial system, which had been much neglected since Richelieu's time. France possessed only Canada with Acadia, Cayenne, the island of Bourbon, a few factories in Madagascar and the Indies. Colbert bought, for less than a million, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, and several other of the Lesser Antilles (1664); he placed the French buccaneers, who had seized upon the eastern part of St. Domingo, under the protection of France, sent new colonies to Cayenne, took Newfoundland, and commenced the occupation of the magnificent valley of the Mississippi, or Louisiana. In Africa, he took

Goree from the Dutch, and took possession of the east shores of Madagascar. In Asia, the India Company established itself at Surat, at Chandernagore, and later at Pondicherry. And finally, in order to keep all the commerce of the colonies under the national flag, Colbert closed their ports to all foreign ships, while for the purpose of developing agriculture he prohibited (in 1669) the importation into France of tobaccos and sugars from Brazil — an unfortunate measure, which had the effect of alienating Portugal and throwing her into the arms of England.

Military Marine. — Colbert first repaired the few vessels that Mazarin had left in the ports of France; then he bought some from Sweden and Holland, employed builders and rope-makers from Hamburg, Riga, and Danzig, and established dockyards at Dunkirk, Havre, and Rochefort. Henry IV. had discovered Toulon, and Richelieu Brest. Vauban surrounded the latter with formidable defences. He also constructed, after the peace of Nymwegen, immense works at Toulon, which made this city one of the finest ports in the world.

In order to increase the navy, Colbert instituted the maritime registration, which obliged the maritime population of the coasts to furnish, in return for certain privileges, the crews necessary for manning the vessels. This institution was completed by the establishment of a system of pensions for sailors. In 1661 the fleet was composed of only thirty vessels; in 1678 it numbered one hundred and twenty, and five years later one hundred and seventy-six. In 1692 the king had one hundred and thirty-one ships, one hundred and thirty-three frigates, and one hundred and one other vessels. The administration of naval affairs was separated from the military command, with advantage to both services. The corps of marine guards, composed of a thousand gentlemen, was instituted for the purpose of training officers; also a school for cannoneers, a school of hydrography, an upper naval council, and a council for naval constructions.

The Fine Arts. — Colbert, it is true, had reformed the finances, commerce, and navigation, but he surrounded them with such minute regulations that the initiative of individuals was too often supplanted by that of the government; he endeavored also to regulate thought, and place the moral life of France as he had placed its material life, and as

Richelieu had placed its political life, — in the hands of the king. He instituted, in 1663, the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres; in 1666, the Academy of Sciences. The Academy of Music was organized in 1669, and that of Architecture in 1671. A school of Fine Arts, established at Rome (1667), received the pupils who had taken the prizes at the Academy of Painting in Paris. More than ten thousand volumes and a large number of precious manuscripts were added to the Royal library; the Mazarin library was opened to the public; the Jardin des Plantes enlarged; the foundation of provincial academies encouraged.

Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Molière, and twenty others received pensions; even foreigners shared the king's generosity. It must be said, however, that the literary budget was never very burdensome. In the year when pensions reached the highest figure the total expenditure did not exceed one hundred thousand livres.

Louvois; Reform of the Army. — The attempt of Francis I. to create a French infantry in the form of provincial legions had not succeeded. In 1558 Henry II. had reorganized these legions, which he divided into regiments and companies. The four oldest regiments, those of Picardy, Champagne, Navarre, and Piedmont, had the first rank in the army. Under Louis XIII. regiments were divided into battalions. They were recruited by voluntary enlistment, which often brought in the dregs of the people, and commissions were sold. The cavalry had been organized by Charles VII.; it was composed of nobles. Louis XII. added to this heavy cavalry a lighter cavalry, which foreigners joined, and in 1558 the dragoons were organized. The light-horse date from Henry IV.; the musketry and riflemen, from Louis XIII. The cavalry also was divided into regiments, squadrons, and companies. The artillery was numerous, but had no especial corps to manage and defend it; the same was the case with the engineers. All these arms awaited the advent of the great administrator to whom Louis XIV. confided the portfolio of war in 1666.

Colbert had organized peace; Louvois, "the greatest and most brutal of clerks," organized war. François-Michel le Tellier, Marquis of Louvois, born in 1641, entered the office of his father, the secretary of State, and was initiated by a long apprenticeship into the science of military administration, to which he brought an activity equal to that of Col-

bert. When Louis XIV. decided to govern alone, Louvois became really minister of war, although he did not succeed le Tellier till 1666. He reformed the army, and his reforms lasted as long as the old monarchy. He preserved the system of voluntary enlistment; he diminished the abuses and the danger of it. He established the use of uniforms, instituted magazines of provisions and supplies, barracks, military hospitals, and the Hôtel des Invalides; also the corps of engineers, the schools of artillery, the companies of grenadiers, the regiments of hussars, and companies of cadets.

The army still felt the influence of feudal times. The soldier belonged less to the king than to his colonel; the cavalry had too much prominence, and the nobility would serve nowhere else. With the reign of Louis XIV. the French infantry became, and it long remained, the best in the world. Louvois substituted the musket and bayonet for the pike as its characteristic arm. He revolutionized the army by establishing a fixed order of promotion and by organizing inspection. He did not abolish the sale of commissions, which was operated for the sole benefit of the nobles; but a certain amount of service became a prerequisite to advancement, and promotions, beginning with the rank of colonel, became dependent upon seniority. The nobility attacked with bitter hatred the minister who humbled "men born to command others." Louvois exacted, with inflexible firmness, that each man should do his duty; to be sure of this, he instituted inspectors-general, who continually upheld the king's authority and his own, and stern reproval was the lot of the negligent officers. With such care, France was enabled to arm 125,000 men for the war in Flanders; for the war with the Netherlands, 180,000; before the treaty of Ryswyk, 300,000; during the wars of the Spanish succession, 450,000.

Fortification of the Frontiers; Vauban. — There was one subject, the only one perhaps, upon which the minister of war and the minister of marine acted in concert: this was the fortification of the kingdom. For the accomplishment of this great work they engaged the man who, next to Colbert, is the greatest of this reign. Le Prestre de Vauban was a gentleman of very small fortune, born near Saulieu, in Burgundy (1633). His father had died in the service. A prior of the neighborhood took him in and brought him up. He was just seventeen years old when the disturbances

of the Fronde were at their height. One morning Vauban ran off and joined the great Condé; he fought well and studied better. The good prior had taught him some little geometry; he continued the study, and those early lessons influenced his career. After joining the royal army he served under the most celebrated French engineer of his time. As early as 1663 he had gained such a reputation that Louis XIV. placed him in charge of the fortifications of Dunkirk. This first work of the young engineer was a masterpiece. From that time Vauban was the one man indispensably necessary to all generals when laying siege to cities. In time of war he captured cities, in time of peace he fortified them. It has been estimated that he worked upon three hundred existing fortresses, constructed thirty-three new ones, conducted fifty-three sieges, and took part in one hundred and forty active engagements.

France was not deficient in natural frontiers save on the northeast, from the Rhine to Dunkirk. The barrier which nature had denied, was given to France by Vauban. Beside Dunkirk, he armed Lille, Metz, and Strassburg with their then formidable fortresses. He constructed Maubeuge, repaired Charlemont, and connected these two places with Philippeville, in order to cover Picardy. He closed the outlet of the Ardennes between the Meuse and the Moselle by Longwy. In the valley of the Moselle, the special route of invasion from Germany, he doubled the strength of Metz by constructing Thionville. He built Saarlouis between the Moselle and the Vosges, to cover Lorraine. Bitsch and Pfalzburg became the principal defences of the Vosges, Landau the bulwark of Alsace; and this province, recently conquered, was firmly secured to France by several strong fortresses, and especially Strassburg. Between the Vosges and the Jura he fortified Belfort. He added new works at Besançon and at Briançon, and built Mont-Dauphin almost on the ridge of the Alps. The Pyrenees offered only two passes practicable to armies; Vauban built Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Mont-Louis to cover them. He visited the coasts several times and left everywhere traces of his presence. He erected fortifications at Antibes and transformed Toulon. He reconstructed the walls of Rochelle on a new plan, built the fortress of the Isle of Ré and fortified Brest. His plans for Cherbourg and Havre were not carried out. Boulogne received some new works; he constructed important ones at Calais.

Vauban, who fortified places, knew still better how to capture them. He advanced slowly but surely; he marched under cover of his lines, so that the troops were sufficiently within reach of each other for mutual support, never made outright attacks when they could be dispensed with, was sparing of the common soldiers, who had formerly been sacrificed with prodigality, and attained his end incomparably sooner. No fortress proved impregnable to him. The invention of the socket, which enables infantry to fire with the bayonet on the end of the gun, is also due to him.

In his many journeys around the frontiers by land and sea Vauban had an eye to commercial as well as to military situations; he multiplied military plans, but was not neglectful of those which would encourage agriculture and peaceful industry. He marked out havens, canals to be dug, piers and dams to be constructed; he pointed out methods of improving the navigation of the streams and rivers. Colbert himself possessed no higher degree of love for the public welfare than did this great citizen.

Legislative Reforms. — In 1665 Colbert proposed to reconstruct the whole legislation of France; he demanded at the outset that justice should be free, that the sale of offices should be abolished, that the number of monks should be diminished, and the useful professions encouraged. A commission was appointed, composed of councillors of State and "masters of requests." When the work was completed they discussed it with prominent members of Parliament, in the presence of ministers, and under the presidency of Chancellor Séguier, and sometimes under that of the king. Six codes were the result of these deliberations; in 1667 the *civil ordinance*, or Code Louis, which abolished some unjust forms of judicial procedure which had come down from the Middle Ages, and abridged others; in 1669, that of *waters and forests*, the principal provisions of which are still in force; in 1670, the *ordinance of criminal instruction*, which limited the application of torture and various cases of provisory imprisonment, dictated uniform rules for all courts, but permitted neither counsel nor defence for the accused in capital cases, and retained the atrocious severity of penalties; in 1673, the *ordinance of commerce*, a really glorious achievement of Colbert; in 1681, that of the *marine and colonies*; in 1685, the *black code*, which regulated the condition of the negroes in the French colonies. These ordinances are the greatest work of codification which was executed from Justinian's time to Napoleon's. A portion of them are still in force; the ordinance of the marine composes almost all the second book of the present French code of commerce.

De Lionne; Foreign and Diplomatic Affairs. — If Colbert and Louvois assisted Louis XIV. to make successful warfare by the re-establishment of finances, the creation of a marine, and the reformation of the army, Lionne, secretary of State, also paved the way to success by his negotiations. Moreover, the king paid close attention to this department; he himself wrote the first despatches to the ambassadors, frequently made rough draughts of the most important letters, and always read the instructions sent out in his name. When Lionne died, in 1671, the king appointed, as his successor, the Marquis of Pomponne, who had managed successfully several embassies. Pomponne directed all the negotiations which brought about the peace of Nymwegen; but Louis found him far inferior to Lionne.

Centralization. — Some of the ministers of Louis XIV., and particularly Colbert and Louvois, were certainly great administrators, but they were not and never could be great statesmen. Colbert himself only endeavored to make France richer, in order to make the king more powerful. All of them labored to build up that excessive centralization which enveloped the whole country, its industry, its commerce, its body and soul, with a thousand bonds of minute regulations, so that the initiative of the ministers constantly took the place of the free action of individuals and communities. The result of this system was that France lived less by her own life than by that of the government. When age and sickness should weaken the hand which was felt everywhere, everything would decline. But for the present, at any rate, and for twenty years yet, this government, which constituted itself the universal guardian, was to give the people security, glory, and prosperity, in compensation for the liberty of which it deprived them.