When the king rose in the morning, it was almost a religious ceremony. The nobles, according to their order of rank, were admitted to witness the spectacle. It was the duty and the privilege of a few to do more. They took part in it. One favored lord handed the king his slippers; another poured out the water for him to wash; a third put on his robe; a fourth arranged his cravat.

All that the king touched was regarded with reverence. If a courtier passed through the royal apartments when Louis was absent, he bowed before the chair or the couch which His Majesty had occupied, as he would before a shrine in a church.

A journal was kept of what the monarch said and did from hour to hour. His physician, who was constantly in attendance, took frequent notes of his health. Among other things that he gravely wrote down was the remarkable fact that the king sometimes caught cold like ordinary mortals! It was currently believed that the touch of the royal hand could cure certain diseases, and on occasions hundreds of poor scrofulous sufferers were brought to the court to be healed.

If constant adulation could have killed the king, he would have died young; for poets, preachers, orators, and historians vied with the nobles and with each other in praising his magnanimity, his glory, and his power. In Paris, bronze and marble statues and portraits of him abounded, and after every great victory some new monument or triumphal arch would be erected to do him honor.

151. Louis XIV's Ability; his Partial Encouragement of Eminent Men. — Yet it must be said to the credit of Louis XIV that all this flattery did not destroy in him certain really great qualities. He never became an idler or a trifler. He knew how to select able men and how to retain them in his service, and none but an able man can do that.

If he exacted the most scrupulous courtesy from all who approached him, he exhibited the same courtesy himself,

and never passed one of his servants without some token of recognition. By nature he possessed remarkable dignity of manner, so that though he was in reality both short and small, he seemed to every one who saw him tall and majestic.[1]

He had that habitual gravity which is said to be the best possible mask for deficiencies. If he was not great, he at least succeeded in making every one believe that he was. France gloried in such a ruler, because in him she saw herself reflected and exalted. He was the embodiment of her pride and of her desire for homage.

Louis liked to feel that he led the civilization of Europe, and that he was the patron of all that was noble in art, literature, or science. He took the title of "Protector of Letters." With his reign, directly or indirectly, are associated many of the most eminent men of genius that the country has produced, — such poets and dramatists as Corneille, Racine, Molière, Boileau, and La Fontaine; such pulpit orators as Bourdaloue, Bossuet, and Massillon; such prose writers as La Bruyère, Fénelon, Rochefoucauld, and Madame de Sévigné; such thinkers as Descartes, Malebranche, and Pascal; such artists as Poussin and Claude Lorraine.[2]

These men were to France what their contemporaries — Milton, Dryden, Newton, Hobbes, and Locke — were to England. But they had this advantage: that at a time when the English writers were hardly known outside the narrow limits of their island, they, on the contrary, were read, not in translation, but in their own language, throughout Europe; and,

[1] See Macaulay's essay on Dumont's Mirabeau, and compare Thackeray's caricature of Louis XIV in The Paris Sketch Book ("Meditations at Versailles").

[2] Corneille (kor-nāy′); Racine (ră-seen′); Molière (mo-le-êr′); Boileau (bwa-lō′); La Fontaine (lä fŏn-tān′); Bourdaloue (boor-dä-loo′); Bossuet (bo′sü-ā′); La Bruyère (lä brü-e-yêr′); Fénelon (fā-neh-lŏɴ′); Rochefoucauld (rosh-foo-kō′); Sévigné (sā-vēn-yā′); Descartes (dā-kärt′); Malebranche (mal-brŏɴsh′); Poussin (poo-săɴ′).

furthermore, that language was used by the diplomats and sovereigns of every civilized court.[1]

In fact, from this time throughout the eighteenth century French educators, men of science, architects, and artists may be fairly said to have done more for the advance of civilization than those of any other nation. So that, at the very time when France was declining politically, she was at the height of her power intellectually.

But there is another side to this royal patronage of eminent men. Louis did not long let the light of his countenance shine on those who opposed his prejudices or forgot to flatter his greatness. Corneille's old age was passed in abject poverty. Pascal narrowly escaped trial for heresy. Fénelon was dismissed from the king's palace in disgrace, because he had the manhood to teach that "the many are not made for the use of the one." Finally, the Society of Port Royal, an association of scholars near Paris, was ruthlessly broken up, and even the bones of their dead thrown out of their graves to the dogs, simply because their Catholicism was different from that favored by the Jesuits and the court.

152. Louis XIV's Plans of Conquest; his Provinces in America. — Louis XIV, however, was not satisfied to be great at home only, but was resolved to be so abroad as well. In fact, his "overvaulting ambition" proved to be the ultimate ruin of the French monarchy. Charles V's empire had, as we have seen,[2] extended over more than two thirds of the civilized

[1] French, it is said, was more familiar to Frederick the Great than his own German tongue. He constantly wrote and corresponded in it. So Catherine II of Russia, Gustavus III of Sweden, and even George II of England used it in conversation and in correspondence. The learned societies of Prussia, Russia, and Italy drew up many of their papers and reports in French; and Leibnitz, the distinguished German philosopher, wrote his greatest work — his "Theodicy" — in that language. At a later date, Franklin and Jefferson both acknowledged the powerful influence of French thought; and the names of Descartes, Pascal, Laplace, Jussieu, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Montesquieu, and Voltaire were justly ranked among the most renowned of the century.

[2] See Paragraph 99.

continent of Europe, embracing Spain, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and a large part of Italy. Now that the power of Spain had dwindled, Louis resolved to take the late emperor's place. He aspired to rule not a part but the whole of Europe.

More than that even: he proposed establishing an empire in America such as the world had never seen. Already, devoted Jesuit missionaries were exploring Canada and the West, and laboring with Christian zeal and Christian self-sacrifice to convert the Indians. The time too was coming when Marquette[1] and Joliet[2] would venture on the waters of Lake Michigan and of the Mississippi, and when La Salle,[3] floating down that river in his birch-bark canoe to the Gulf of Mexico, would name the whole vast region Louisiana in honor of Louis XIV.[4]

153. First War with Spain in the Netherlands. — On the continent of Europe Louis resolved to begin a series of "political wars." That is, unlike the kings of the early ages, he fought not out of mere love of fighting, or out of jealousy or fear, but chiefly for the glory and legitimate extension of France. His purpose was to reach and hold some natural boundary like the Rhine, or to incorporate some population speaking the French tongue, or lastly to secure some necessary point of defense.

In 1665 an opportunity presented itself, and the king commenced hostilities. In that year Philip IV died, leaving his dominions to Charles II, his son by a second wife. Louis, it will be remembered,[5] had married Maria Theresa, Philip's daughter by his first marriage. He now claimed the Spanish Netherlands[6] as her inheritance by virtue of an old law of those countries, which gave the daughter of a first wife the preference in inheritance over the son by a second wife.[7]

[1] Marquette (mär-kĕt′). [2] Jol′e-et (English pronunciation).
[3] La Salle (lä säl′).
[4] See The Leading Facts of American History in this series.
[5] See Paragraph 144.
[6] See Paragraph 90. [7] The Law or Right of Devolution.

Charles refused to acknowledge the claim of Louis. War ensued. Then the Protestant powers of England, Holland, and Sweden, fearing the extension of the French power and the Catholic faith through the success of France, compelled Louis to make peace at Aix-la-Chapelle (1668).

But Louis managed, nevertheless, to retain possession of a number of frontier towns in Flanders, and Vauban fortified them so strongly that there was not much probability that they could be retaken. Thus, notwithstanding his apparent failure, the French sovereign had now obtained a firm foothold in the coveted territory.

154. Second War with Spain; War with Holland. — Two years later, by the infamous secret treaty of Dover,[1] Louis bought over Charles II of England, who henceforth bound himself to do his will as far as he dared. He likewise succeeded in inducing Sweden to withdraw from the alliance. Now that England and Sweden were disposed of, the way was clear. The king resolved to overrun Holland, conquer the people, and punish them for presuming to thwart his plans against Spain. That done, he could easily subjugate the Spanish Netherlands, which lay between Holland and France. If successful in this attempt, he would thus extend the northern limits of his kingdom far beyond the Rhine.

In 1672 Louis, commanding in person an army of a hundred thousand men, began a campaign with such generals as Turenne, Condé, Luxembourg, and the indispensable Vauban to aid him. In less than six weeks his force had got possession of most of the country, and were in sight of Amsterdam, its chief city. Jean de Witt, then governor of Holland, who with his brother Cornelius constituted the real head of the republican party, believing further resistance futile, begged for peace. Louis sent back the messengers with an insulting refusal; and the enraged populace, imagining that the De Witts were traitors, attacked them, and tore them to pieces.

[1] See The Leading Facts of English History in this series.

155. Louis XIV versus William of Orange; French Acquisitions. — William of Orange, who later became King William III of England, now had command of the Dutch force. Germany and Spain coöperated with him, and with their help he for six years kept up the struggle for the independence of the Dutch Republic and for Protestant freedom, against the determined efforts of Louis to destroy them.

In his extremity, William, like his great ancestor William the Silent, made an ally of the ocean. The dikes of Holland were cut, and the waters swept over the country around Amsterdam, compelling the French to fall back to higher ground.

But Louis would not give up his attempt. The fight went on by both land and sea. Battle after battle was waged, in one of which the king lost Turenne, his greatest general. At length, worn out by the conflict, both sides desired peace, and the Treaty of Nimeguen[1] was signed in 1678.

Louis had conquered neither Holland nor the coveted Spanish Netherlands; but in the course of the war he had secured many places of importance in the latter territory,[2] and had also forced Spain to give him, on the east, the important county of Burgundy, or Franche Comté,[3] as it was called.

In honor of these successes, the authorities of Paris erected the magnificent triumphal arches of St. Denis and St. Martin;[4] and in 1680 they voted that the king should receive the title of the "Grand Monarch."

156. Misery of France; Death of Colbert. — But at the very time when the exultant citizens of the French capital were decreeing their king the title of "Grand Monarch," the period of

[1] Nimeguen (nim′ā-gen).

[2] In all, Louis gained thirty-four cities on the east and north, of which Aire, St. Omer, Valenciennes, Cambrai, Luxembourg, and Strasburg were the principal.

[3] Franche Comté (frŏnsh-kȯn-tā′). See Map No. XI, page 236. It was formerly called the county of Burgundy, and lay east of the duchy of that name, with which it should not be confounded, the duchy having been incorporated with France in the reign of Louis XI. See Paragraph 90.

[4] St. Denis (săn-dnē′); St. Martin (săn mär-tăn′).

decline had set in. Though in the grandeur of his court, the eminence of his circle of noted men, and his general influence, Louis stood at the head of European civilization, though it was through France that the continent then received its lessons in culture and in thought, yet France itself was losing. The government resembled a gilded statue of decaying wood — outwardly splendid, but crumbling to dust within.

The long-continued wars had killed off thousands of men in their prime, had drained the country of resources, and had so increased the taxes that the peasantry were in a state of the most pitiable destitution.

Even Colbert, with all his ingenuity, confessed that he no longer knew where to turn for money. La Bruyère[1] described the farm laborers as "ferocious animals." "Black, livid, sunburnt, they are seen," he says, "forever grubbing in the earth: they seem to have an articulate voice; and when they stand erect they exhibit human features; but they live like beasts."

When Louis was asked to give something to relieve the want of these poor creatures, he replied, "Kings give by spending." The answer was not really as heartless as it sounds, but it showed that he had no true realization of the misery of the people. But official accounts soon informed him. He was told that thirty thousand peasants in one province were "obliged to eat weeds and the vilest refuse," and that "many women and children have been found dead on the roads and in the fields, with their mouths full of grass." Archbishop Fénelon wrote to the king: "Your people are perishing by famine. The whole of France is simply a great hospital, and a hospital without food."

Even Vauban, though his trade was war, and he was hardened to scenes of suffering, was so impressed with the misery of the lower classes that he petitioned the king in their behalf. Louis was indignant at the general's presumption. He called

[1] La Bruyère: see Paragraph 151.

him "that philanthropic lunatic," and ordered the petition to be nailed to the pillory.[1]

Colbert did not fare much better. His death in 1683 was probably hastened by the embarrassment of his situation and the bitter reproaches of Louis, who was grievously disappointed because his faithful servant could not raise more money. "If I had served God as I have this man," cried the dying minister, "I should have been saved ten times over; now I don't know what is to become of me."

157. Precarious State of the Nobility; Wearisomeness of Court Life. — The nobility lived in seeming magnificence at Versailles, but to many of them the palace was little more than a splendid prison. They did not dare to remain away from the court, since their doing so would rouse suspicion of their loyalty. Their estates suffered by their absence. Their overseers took advantage of them, and the returns they made were constantly diminishing.

On the other hand, the expenses of the nobles at court were always on the increase. Those whose income was small had to spend everything, and then they ran in debt to keep up appearances. The more precarious their position, the more dependent they were. Two resources only were open to them: one was the king's favor, the other, the gambling table. Just in proportion as they grew more helpless, Louis grew more exacting and despotic.

The proudest lord at his court knew that he was completely in the king's power: a word or a look might raise or might ruin him. At the royal receptions, which were held daily and lasted for hours, no one ventured to sit in the sovereign's presence even for a moment. There stood the crowd of courtiers, silent, weary, expectant, always on the watch for opportunities, offices, and pensions. Some, indeed, were so anxious that

[1] The pillory: a platform on which offenders were exposed to public insult and abuse.

they hardly dared sleep, lest they should miss getting some coveted position. "At what hour shall I call your lordship?" asked the servant of the Duke of Noailles.[1] "At ten o'clock, if no one dies meanwhile," replied the duke; "but should any one happen to die, call me early, so that I can beg his place."

When we reflect that this court etiquette was never relaxed, that this scramble for office was always going on, we cannot wonder that it ended in utter weariness and disgust. There were times, indeed, when even Louis XIV was glad to escape the bondage of pomp and ceremony, and snatch a few hours of relaxation in the society of one or two chosen favorites. Madame de Maintenon,[2] whom the king had privately married in 1684, shortly after the death of the queen, wrote to her brother that she was worn out with life in the palace. "Save those who fill the highest stations," said she, "I know of none more unfortunate than those that envy them."

158. **Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; Persecution of the Huguenots; the Camisards; Propositions of Bossuet.** — As if the prosperity and welfare of France had not been sufficiently undermined, Louis now decided to strike the country a blow from which it is doubtful if it has ever fully recovered.

We have seen that Henry IV, by the Edict of Nantes,[3] granted the Huguenots civil rights and liberty of worship, a policy which Richelieu and Mazarin, though they were zealous Catholics, continued. Louis, however, had no sympathy with that policy. There was a democratic element in Calvinism which he feared, and, in common with many leading men of his day, he believed that it was unsafe to tolerate a different religion from that maintained by the state. He had tried to buy over the Huguenots, but not having made all the progress he desired, he resolved to employ force.

[1] Noailles (no-ä'y').
[2] Madame de Maintenon (deh măn-teh-nōn').
[3] Edict of Nantes: see Paragraph 132.

In this determination he was warmly seconded by Madame de Maintenon. She had been brought up a Calvinist, but had early abjured that faith and joined the Catholics. She was eager to compel her former fellow-Protestants to follow her example. Her influence over the king was immense; and she, with his Jesuit confessor, Père La Chaise,[1] urged him to make amends for his past life of profligacy by uprooting the Huguenot heresy.

Thus urged, the king signed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the autumn of 1685. He ordered the Huguenot churches to be destroyed and the Huguenot ministers to leave the realm within fifteen days, at the same time forbidding the members of their congregations to follow them. Those ministers who refused to go suffered death; while, on the other hand, those Huguenots who attempted to escape from France with their exiled pastors were pursued, and if caught, cast into loathsome dungeons or sent to the more terrible punishment of the galleys.[2]

In order to compel the Protestants to abandon their faith, Louvois[3] had recommended the king to quarter the dragoons — the most brutal class of French soldiers — in their houses, giving the men full permission to harass and insult the families with whom they stopped. These "missionaries in cavalry boots," as they were then jocosely styled, had been employed for some time before the revocation of the edict, and had perpetrated such cruelties that many thousands embraced the Catholic faith merely to get rid of their persecutors. The king, who probably did not know the atrocities of these "dragonnades," as they were called, was induced to continue them, in the belief that soon not a Calvinist would be left "unconverted."

[1] Père La Chaise (pair lä shāz'): his name is perpetuated in the great cemetery of Père La Chaise, Paris, which was formerly a Jesuit estate under his control.
[2] Galleys: see Paragraph 104.
[3] Louvois: see Paragraph 147.

After the Edict of Nantes was repealed, the dragoons set to work with renewed ardor, torturing their victims to a degree just short of actual murder. They hanged peasants, head downward, in their chimneys; they inflicted horrible outrages on the women; they tore babes from their mothers' arms, bound them to posts, and compelled the mothers to choose between renouncing their religion or seeing their infants slowly starved to death. The result of this system of persecution was to force multitudes of Huguenots to leave their native land forever. Those who lived in the vicinity of seaports secreted themselves on board vessels bound for some foreign country; and although many were smoked out of their hiding places or suffocated in them by the fumes of burning sulphur, still great numbers escaped.

Others managed to slip across the frontier into the neighboring states. So despite all the vigilance of the government, several hundred thousand — some estimates say half a million — succeeded in fleeing to England, Germany, Holland, and America. Twenty thousand settled in Berlin, and great numbers in London. They carried with them the knowledge of trades and manufactures, such as silk weaving and watch making, which France had nearly or wholly monopolized. The Huguenots now established these and other branches of industry in England and elsewhere, greatly to the detriment of the dominions of Louis.

The king had, in fact, driven out a host of his most thrifty, intelligent, and loyal subjects. Among them were many who were eminent in art, science, letters, and arms; for the Huguenots were, to a great extent, not only the bone and sinew, but the brain and conscience, of the land; so that the queen of Sweden well might say of Louis XIV's suicidal act, "He has cut off his left arm with his right."

The sufferings of these exiles excited pity in every country where they sought refuge and protection. Hearty welcome and

assistance greeted them in all Protestant countries. They and their descendants became the inflexible enemies of political and religious tyranny. The Huguenots did much toward establishing the cause of liberty in England and on the continent. "They manned the ships which destroyed Louis XIV's navy." Last of all, at a later period, they distinguished themselves in both legislating and fighting for American independence.[1]

But not all the Huguenots were willing to suffer without resistance. In the mountains of the Cévennes[2] and at other points in the south, the Camisards,[3] who were to France what the Covenanters were to Scotland, rose in revolt. Later, this insurrection became serious, and it was not finally put down till more than a hundred thousand had perished in the civil war.

But if Louis treated the Protestants with such intolerance, he none the less refused to submit to the decree of the pope. The king claimed the right to appoint priests to parishes in those dioceses which were without a bishop, and also to manage the affairs of the diocese until the new bishop should have taken the oath of allegiance. The pope denied this power. Louis called a council of the chief clergy of France. Bossuet preached the opening sermon, and declared that as the ocean has its limits, so too the papacy must have. Then at the request of his council he drew up four articles (1682) which virtually established the independence of the Catholic

[1] Most of Louis XIV's military leaders in the middle of the seventeenth century were Huguenots. Turenne, the king's ablest general, had been a Protestant, but was converted to Catholicism by the arguments of the eloquent and learned Bossuet. In American history we find such well-known Huguenot names as Peter Faneuil, Paul Revere, General Marion, and three of the presidents of the Continental Congress, — Elias Boudinot, Henry Laurens, and John Jay.

[2] Cévennes (sā-vĕnn′): on the border of Languedoc, in the south of France.

[3] Camisards: so called from the *camisade*, or white shirt or jacket which the insurrectionists wore in order to recognize each other at night.

Church of France, so far as the supremacy of the pope is concerned.[1]

159. War with England; Peace of Ryswick. — Three years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1688) Louis found to his cost that he had driven the Calvinists from France only to rouse against himself their great leader, William of Orange, who had now, by the English revolution and the flight of James II, become king of England.[2] Louis became involved in a war with England, in which he endeavored to force that nation to restore the cowardly James to the throne he had disgraced and abandoned. William found ready assistance from the enemies of France, and a grand alliance was formed by England, Holland, Austria, and Spain against that country.

At the decisive battle of the Boyne, fought in Ireland in 1690, the combined forces of James II and of Louis XIV were hopelessly beaten.[3] The French king furthermore had learned to his chagrin that a regiment of Huguenot refugees, commanded by Marshal Schomberg, one of the French king's former generals and himself a Huguenot, contributed toward his defeat. Thus soon had retribution begun. Louis next planned an attack on England by sea; but his fleet, after a terrible battle off Cape La Hogue,[4] was forced to retreat, and

[1] The Four Propositions of Bossuet declared: (1) That the pope has no jurisdiction in temporal things. (2) That in spiritual matters the general councils of the Church are to be considered the supreme authority. (3) That the established rules and usages of the Church of France are not to be changed by the pope. (4) That the decrees of the pope in matters of doctrine require to be confirmed by the Church.

Later, a compromise was effected between the pope and Louis XIV; but the Propositions are generally considered to still represent the attitude of the French Catholic Church in great measure, though the tendency is to soften and qualify rather than emphasize the principles they express. See also Paragraph 92, note 3.

[2] The intolerance and despotism of James II of England brought on the revolution of 1688. James fled to Louis XIV for protection, and henceforth resided in France. William of Orange, who married James's daughter Mary, now became king of England by act of Parliament.

[3] See The Leading Facts of English History in this series.

[4] Cape La Hogue: on the east coast of the department of La Manche, in northern France, on the English Channel. Care must be taken not to confound it with Cape La Hague, at the extremity of the peninsula of La Manche.

the French admiral had to burn his ships to prevent their capture by the English.

Meantime the French force invaded the Palatinate, a Protestant province of Germany, on the Rhine. They ravaged the country with fire and sword. The homeless and starving inhabitants were driven out to beg their bread, leaving behind them the smoking ruins of what had once been populous and thriving cities. Louis gained several important victories in the Netherlands; but the war as a whole was not in his favor, and his losses were so heavy that in 1697 he was glad to sign the Peace of Ryswick.[1] By this treaty he was obliged to renounce his efforts to restore James II to the English throne, to acknowledge his hated rival, William of Orange, as the legitimate king of England, and to give up the cities he had taken in the Netherlands, with his other conquests beyond the Rhine.

160. War of the Spanish Succession; Peace of Utrecht. — But peace was not to be of long duration. In 1701 Louis began a new war, called the War of the Spanish Succession, which lasted for nearly fourteen years.

We have seen that Mazarin planned the king's marriage with Maria Theresa, daughter of the king of Spain,[2] in the belief that in time his master would become ruler of that country by the union of the two crowns. This now seemed likely to be accomplished, for the king of Spain had died childless and had left the throne to a grandson of Louis, which was practically nearly the same as if he had left it to Louis himself. In his exultation at the prospect, the French monarch exclaimed, "The Pyrenees are no more"; for in imagination he now saw all barriers leveled, and Spain henceforth a dependency of France.

But his joy was premature. England, Holland, Prussia, and the empire of Germany felt that they had a word to say in this

[1] Ryswick (rĭz′wĭk): a village of Holland.

[2] See Paragraph 144.

matter. They resolved that France should gain no new territory and no increase of power.[1] At Blenheim, in Bavaria, the English Duke of Marlborough, with Prince Eugene,[2] gained a decisive victory over Louis with his ally, the Elector of Bavaria.

As Alison says, the blow struck there "resounded through every part of Europe." Great as some of the French king's generals were, they had now found one greater than themselves; for Voltaire declares that Marlborough "never besieged a city that he did not take, or fought a battle that he did not win."

Blenheim was followed by French reverses in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Marlborough broke through Vauban's boasted "Iron Frontier," and entered France itself.[3] Then came the terrible winter of 1708–1709, such a winter as had never been known in the history of the country. Even the olive trees in the south were killed by the severity of the cold. The king's servants begged in the streets of Paris, and Madame de Maintenon and the dainty nobles of the court were glad to get even black bread to eat. Louis was in such need of money that he sold a service of gold plate to raise a few hundred thousand francs.

Then death entered the palace, and the proud king lost his only son. He was now a childless old man, and the world had turned against him; but he did not lose his composure or sacrifice his dignity. He was greater in adversity than he had ever been before. In 1712 a dispatch from Marshal Villars informed the king that his troops had gained the battle of Denain on the frontier. This victory rendered France secure and hastened the Peace of Utrecht,[4] which was concluded in 1713.

[1] See Paragraph 100.

[2] Prince Eugene of Savoy. He led the forces of the German emperor.

[3] Gaining the great victories of Ramillies and Oudenarde, and the indecisive battle of Malplaquet.

[4] Utrecht (ū'trĕkt): in Holland.

The chief terms of the treaty were: (1) Louis XIV's grandson was left on the throne of Spain,[1] though all thoughts of uniting that country to France were renounced; Austria received the Spanish Netherlands (Belgium) as a barrier between Holland and France; (2) the fortresses of the frontier were to be garrisoned by the Dutch as a perpetual check on France; (3) Louis bound himself to recognize the Protestant succession to the throne of England,[2] and to send James II's son, the "Pretender," out of France;[3] (4) Louis gave up Newfoundland, Hudson Bay Territory, and Acadia[4] (Nova Scotia) to England; (5) finally, Louis agreed to demolish the magnificent fortifications of Dunkerque which Vauban had constructed at such enormous cost.[5]

161. Death of the King.—Two years later (1715) Louis XIV died. The last part of his long reign of over threescore and ten years had been as gloomy as the first was glorious. Everything he had depended upon had failed. His armies were no more. His navy was reduced to a few battered hulks. He had lost a part of his North American possessions. His treasury was empty, his people desperate. The son and grandson he had counted on to perpetuate his grandeur were in their graves. His successor was only a feeble child, not likely to live to wear the crown.

But Louis met death like a king. There was no repining. He met it alone; that is, with no person that he cared for

[1] The allies had wished to make the archduke of Austria king of Spain, but he had now become emperor of Germany, and the allies did not desire to increase his power by giving him the Spanish crown, but preferred leaving Louis' grandson in possession of it.

[2] That is, the exclusion of a Catholic from the English throne,—a provision made by Parliament after the flight of James II.

[3] So called because he claimed the crown of England.

[4] On the expulsion of the French settlers of Acadia by the English in 1755, see Longfellow's poem of "Evangeline"; but compare Parkman's Montcalm and Wolfe, and see The Leading Facts of American History in this series.

[5] See Paragraph 147.

near him. His Jesuit confessor, Le Tellier,[1] had left Versailles at the last, when he saw that Louis' sun was setting never to rise again. Madame de Maintenon too had gone: priest and wife were both heartless.

When the news reached Paris that Louis was no more, the city could not contain itself for joy. All along the road leading to the royal tomb at St. Denis, the people set up tents and booths. There they drank and sang over their deliverance from a king whom they had ceased to take pride in, and over the fall of the hated Le Tellier, who was soon to go into exile. There they waited to see the corpse of the "Grand Monarch" pass by, and to curse it as it passed.

No one has summed up the reign better than Guizot. He says, "The government of Louis XIV was a great fact, a powerful and brilliant fact, but it was built upon sand."

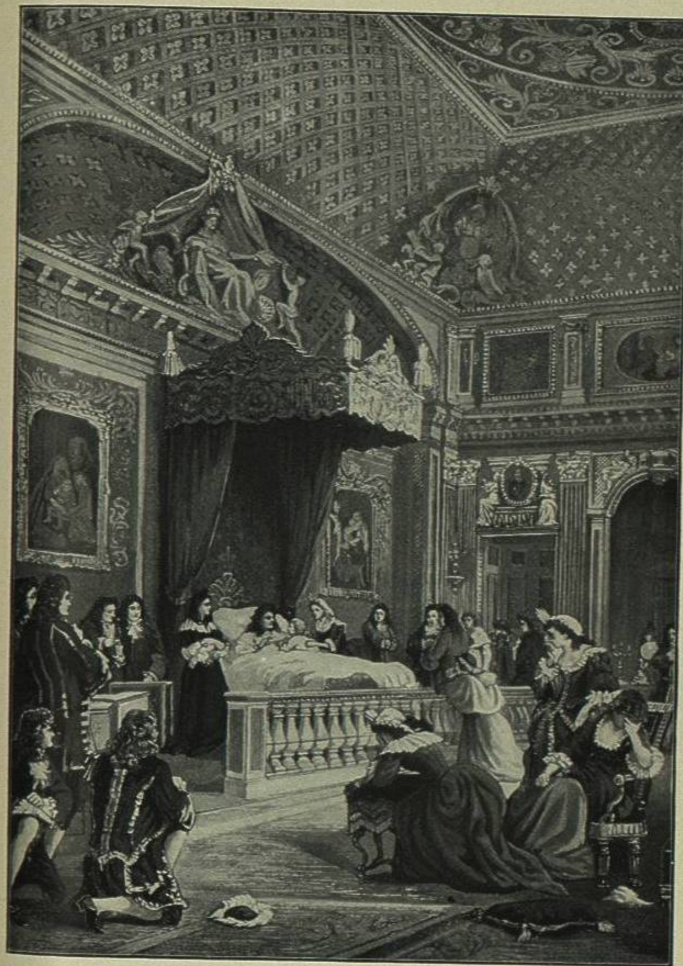
162. Louis XV (1715); Alliance against Spain; Education of the Prince. — The new king, Louis XV, was five years old. He inherited from his great-grandfather, Louis XIV, a realm whose peasantry could scarcely get food sufficient to keep themselves alive, and burdened with a debt of nearly two thousand five hundred millions of francs.[2]

During the king's minority, the Duke of Orléans, a good-natured profligate, acted as regent. From personal reasons, the duke formed an alliance with England and Holland. Subsequently a quadruple alliance was formed between England, Holland, Austria, and France against the schemes of Spain to get control of the French crown.

The young prince was educated in the same ideas of arbitrary power that Louis XIV had cherished. It is said that

[1] Le Tellier (lẹh tĕl-le-ā′): he was the successor of Père La Chaise (see Paragraph 158). Some writers represent him as remaining with the king until the end, but Martin (Histoire de France, XIV, 614) says explicitly that he did not.

[2] Five hundred million dollars, or, reckoned according to the present value of money, over one billion dollars.



DEATH OF LOUIS XIV

his teacher, an eminent abbé,[1] was one day reading to him a chapter of French history in which the death of a king was incidentally mentioned. The prince interrupted him with an expression of astonishment. "What," said he, "do you mean to say that kings die?" "Well, — Your Highness, — yes, — *sometimes*," was the hesitating and politic reply. The anecdote, whether literally true or not, is at least truthful, and illustrates the exalted conception of royalty characteristic of the time.

But if the heir to the throne had no practical idea of the facts of his situation, there were those who had. The Duke of Orléans knew that the first and most pressing need to be met was a supply of money. As a half-starving people did not seem likely to yield much, even to the most grinding and heartless body of tax collectors, the prospect was not encouraging.

163. Law's Financial Scheme. — At this juncture (1715) a Scotchman named John Law came forward with a brilliant expedient for relieving the necessities of the government. His plan was to open a bank connected with the state, in which paper should do the duty of gold and silver. He started the enterprise with an imaginary capital of six million francs. By issuing small notes which were promptly redeemed in specie, and by other shrewd management, Law soon created confidence in the undertaking, and those who had money to invest eagerly bought stock. The government now gave its sanction to this "going concern" by granting it a charter as a royal bank, and issuing orders that its notes should be accepted in payment of taxes, customhouse duties, and the like.

To this government bank Law joined an organization called the Mississippi Company, which promised to make its shareholders "rich beyond the dreams of avarice." The valley of

[1] Abbé (ȧb'bā): originally an abbot or head of a monastery; but later, a title given to a professor or private tutor who had studied theology.

the Mississippi was currently reported to be full of mines of gold and silver, and every greedy or needy Frenchman was invited by this company to come forward and get his share of the superabounding wealth.

As if all this was not enough, Law next proceeded to absorb an African and a West Indian trading scheme, in order that the Mississippi Company might enjoy a complete monopoly of colonial speculation. This new project was hailed with such enthusiasm by a confiding public, that Law now seriously proposed undertaking the payment of the national debt, just as the directors of the South Sea Company were proposing to do in England about the same time.[1]

Such was the desire to invest that the stock rapidly rose in value until it finally reached forty times its par value, and a share selling originally for five hundred francs ($100) brought no less than twenty thousand ($4000) !

Even at this price it was impossible to satisfy the demand. Law's house in Paris was besieged day and night by people of all ranks. Noblemen, bishops, ladies of the court, petty tradesmen, and even servants who had saved up enough to purchase a single share, blocked the passage leading to the door of this wonderful Scotch magician, who was believed to have discovered an easy and universal road to fortune.

At last the excitement reached such a pitch that Law himself became alarmed at the prospect. He tried in vain to check the mad speculation by reducing the excessive issue of paper money. But it was too late. The gilded bubble he had blown by means of his national bank kept on expanding until it suddenly burst.

Law, who seems to have been honest, and to have thoroughly believed in his enterprise, suffered with the rest, and just managed to escape from France with his life. Multitudes found themselves hopelessly ruined. The government

[1] See The Leading Facts of American History in this series.

extricated itself, in a measure, by repudiating a large portion of its obligations, as it had done once before and would do again.

This convenient way of paying off national creditors led a wit of that day to define the French monarchy as "an institution that has the privilege of going into bankruptcy when it pleases." But even this bright saying did not restore the country to good humor, though it may have helped it, in some degree, to bear its losses.

164. Accession of Louis XV ; War of the Polish Succession. — When, in 1723, at the ripe age of thirteen, Louis XV began to rule, he gave little promise of good. He was by nature and by education a true Bourbon, one of that family who (Henry IV excepted) were to France what the narrow-minded and tyrannical Stuarts were to England, and of whom Napoleon said that "they never forgot and never learned anything."

One of his first acts was to renew that Huguenot persecution which had already crippled France so seriously.[1] Following this, a number of years later, the young king engaged in a war with the emperor of Germany, in order to force that monarch to reinstate his father-in-law[2] on the throne of Poland. The emperor, however, compromised the matter by giving the duchy of Lorraine to the expelled king, with the provision that at his death it should fall to his daughter, the queen of France, and so become part of Louis' dominion.[3]

165. War of the Austrian Succession ; Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle ; Commercial Prosperity. — But in 1740, when the Emperor Charles VI died, a new and much more formidable war broke out. This concerned the succession to the throne

[1] See Paragraph 158.

[2] Louis XV had married the daughter of a Polish nobleman, who later became king of that country, but was driven from the throne by the Emperor Charles VI of Austria.

[3] The duchy of Bar, joining Lorraine on the west, was included with it in the emperor's grant. France had made conquests of part of Lorraine under Louis XIV, but first obtained full and undisputed possession of it by this treaty.

of Austria. Some years before his death the emperor had left that kingdom by will to his daughter, Maria Theresa. To this arrangement all Europe agreed at the time; but as soon as Charles breathed his last, no less than six claimants came forward, each demanding the whole or some part of the kingdom.

Maria Theresa had plenty of law documents, duly signed, sealed, and witnessed, to prove her right to the crown; but as one of the claimants, Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, said, it would have been better for her if the queen's father had "left her fewer papers and more fighting-men."

Nearly all civilized Europe now took sides in this dispute, which nothing short of cannon could effectually settle. George II of England headed an army in favor of the young queen. France took the opposite course, and sent one against her. The struggle which now began (1741) took the name of the War of the Austrian Succession. It lasted seven years. At Dettingen[1] (1743) George II, who was the last English king who fought in person, drove the French in headlong flight before his impetuous charge.

Then Louis XV, in imitation of the English monarch, took the field himself. He fell sick, however, and did nothing; but notwithstanding this drawback, if it could be considered one, his force gained a great victory over the English at Fontenoy (1745).[2] The next year the French took Brussels, and soon made themselves masters of the Austrian Netherlands, as the country between France and Holland was now called.[3] The next year the most important fortresses of Holland fell into the hands of Louis. In other quarters, however, the French met with reverses, and in 1748 peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle. Maria Theresa was recognized as ruler of Austria;[4] and as each party to the war gave back the territory it had

1 Dettingen (dĕt′tĭng-ẹn): a village in Bavaria.
2 Fontenoy (fŏn-tẹn-wä): a village of Belgium.
3 See Paragraph 160 (Peace of Utrecht).
4 Except Silesia, which Frederick of Prussia had seized, and continued to hold.

conquered, France came out of the contest with nothing but loss — loss of life, money, and commerce.

Eight peaceful and comparatively prosperous years ensued. During this period the French colonies in the East and West Indies and in America made much progress, which served as an offset in considerable degree for the disasters and losses of the late war. The cities of Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Nantes profited greatly by this revival of colonial trade, and the whole country was beginning to feel the good effects of it when a new war broke out which left France far worse off than before.

166. The Seven Years' War; France loses America and India. — The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had been made hurriedly, and simply covered up with fair words the hatred smoldering between Austria and Prussia, and between France and England. Maria Theresa had been forced to give up part of her dominions to Frederick the Great in the late war, and she hoped that, by making an alliance with France and the other powers, she might get back her own with interest. That interest was nothing less than the partition of the kingdom of Prussia among its enemies.

On the other side of the Atlantic, France was already embroiled with England in what was called in America the French and Indian War (1755). But though unprepared to take part in a fresh European contest, the influence of the king's favorite, the beautiful but unscrupulous Madame de Pompadour,[1] who had got Louis completely under her control, decided him to join her friend Maria Theresa in her attempt to dismember Prussia. Frederick the Great formed an alliance with England, and the war formally began.

The real interest of this period centers, however, so far as France is concerned, in her struggle with England in America and in the East, since on it hung the destiny of India on the one hand, and of the American colonies on the other.

1 Pompadour (pŏn-pa-door′).