

lonies. The companies having obtained permission from different ministers, and particularly from count d'Oeyras, to impose duties both on the sale of their own merchandise, and the purchase of the produce of the country, these duties proved very burdensome to the inhabitants of Brazil; they became, on account of them, very much indebted to these companies, who, on their abolition, demanded payment. Accordingly, the count d'Oeyras found himself obliged to take those measures which have dissatisfied both parties. Nevertheless, the merchants who continued the trade after the abolition of the companies, determined to carry on their sales, and make their purchases on the same principle as the companies had done; this produced a state of disorder and confusion in Brazil, for which it was not easy to find a remedy.

The count d'Oeyras aimed another blow at the interests of England, by encouraging a trade with France for grain; and in the year 1766, that country had made very profitable returns from Portugal, under the wise and able administration of the duke de Choiseul. In this particular the count d'Oeyras has found the means to diminish in Lisbon the general dependence on the English merchants. But this branch of commerce, after all, must be precarious and temporary, at least till the marine of France becomes strong enough to form a balance to that of Great Britain.

This successful essay has given birth to another attempt, which has been equally fortunate: to weaken the credit of the English respecting grain, and to lessen their immense profits on the wines of Portugal, the minister ordered a considerable part of the vineyards to be destroyed, and sowed with grain. This unreserved proceeding at once discovered his design, and produced a great clamour against him. The individuals also, whom he was determined to force into a new and more difficult cultivation of their ground, exclaimed against his tyranny, and refused to obey: but he was deaf to their clamours, rigorously insisted upon obedience, and forced his edict to be observed.

In order to understand this extraordinary operation, it is necessary to be informed, that Portugal is all vineyard, except some small cantons in Entre Minho e Douro, and Tras os Montes. The English have purchased, and consequently possess all the prime land in the environs of Oporto and Lisbon, of Setuval and Farro, whose wines are the best and some of them in great estimation; so that the soil of Portugal and its productions may be said to belong to them. These circumstances, which are ruinous to the Portuguese, serve to prove their indolent disposition; of which they do not perceive the disadvantage. They prefer the culture of the vine, which requires but little trouble, to a more laborious cultivation.

The commerce of Portugal being entirely in the hands of the English, and being destitute of pasturage and grain, this kingdom is in an absolute state of dependence, because England furnishes it with all the commodities of which it stands in need. Such are the bonds of servitude that keep Portugal in that alliance with England, which the count d'Oeyras had endeavoured to destroy. He also attacked the English interest, by establishing manufactures for silk, woollen-drapery, leather, and soap. At the same time he published very severe edicts to prohibit the importation of foreign stuffs; but the imperfect fabric of these manufactures, their slow progress, their bad quality, and high price, established the preference given to the silks, the woollens, and leather of England and France, and in spite of the edicts, the importation of foreign manufactures still prevails.

This minister employed all his power to invite by treaties the commerce of Denmark, of Sweden, and of Russia to Lisbon. This was a wise and beneficial measure, because the greater the number of foreigners concerned in the trade of Portugal, the less would remain in possession of England. But it was doing things only by halves, to establish a merely passive commerce. The Portuguese themselves should have been encouraged to navigate the distant seas, and to fetch foreign commodities in their own vessels; in short, to engage in an active commerce.

The count d'Oeyras had agriculture very much at heart, regarding it as

the basis of all government. He resolved to make a general register of the lands in order to ascertain their value, and to discover the means to be employed for bringing them into a state of cultivation; but after all the pains and time employed on this subject, and the calculations made, the lands in question remain untouched by the plough. The whole province of Alentejo is uncultivated: Beira and Algarve continue to be a desert.

The finances of Portugal have been the first objects of attention to the count d'Oeyras; and he reserved this department to himself, though without attaching any title to it. But the opinions on the state of the finances and the revenues of the kingdom are various. It is indeed generally said, that the treasury is full, that Portugal is very rich, and that its revenues are considerable; but there is great reason surely to suspect that the finances cannot be in a very good condition in a kingdom which has neither agriculture nor a marine; which has lately sustained an earthquake that produced so many large bankruptcies, and has been engaged in a very expensive war; whose colonies, which are a principal source of its riches, are so poor, so ill administered, and so harassed, that the people either leave them or revolt; above all, if it is considered that this kingdom has many old debts, and that its wealth, particularly its gold, passes through the hands of the English, who derive all the advantage from it; and, lastly, that the diamonds, of which it possesses a very large store, are a kind of dead stock, which does not enter into circulation. The Portuguese have but very few taxes to pay; nevertheless they live in a state of extreme wretchedness.

Previous to the ministry of the count d'Oeyras, the finances of Portugal were in a most deplorable state of administration; 22,000 clerks or writers, divided into a considerable number of offices, devoured the revenues, embroiled the accounts, and swallowed up the treasure. The minister, by a single edict of the month of October, 1761, reduced this enormous crowd of blood-suckers to thirty-two well qualified and chosen persons. He has simplified the regulations relative to the receipts and payments of the public treasure, by using the same journals as bankers and merchants employ for the insertion of their daily transactions. These books are examined every week; while the king passes the accounts which are presented to him, or gives instructions concerning such as are in a state of preparation; none of which, however, are suffered to be in arrear. The perspicuity, the precision, and the security of this arrangement will appear incomprehensible in the different countries of Europe, where finance is so complicated a science, and such an inextricable labyrinth; but to convince incredulity, it is necessary only to have recourse to Portugal, and to read the edict of the count d'Oeyras, and the execution of this plan will be instantly verified.

There are many varying opinions respecting the revenues of Portugal, which some have calculated at seventy, and others at eighty millions of livres, or between three and four millions sterling. The mines produce annually from fifty to sixty millions of livres, or between two and three millions sterling.

LETTER VI.

View of the internal Affairs of France, from the Peace of Versailles, in 1763, to the Death of Louis XV., in 1774—including some Account of Corsica.

It is a fact, now too well known to be disputed, that France was reduced to such a deplorable situation, towards the close of the year 1762, that it was no longer in the power of her allies to extricate her from the innumerable distresses that surrounded her, both at home and abroad. The most obvious causes, which compelled the French ministry to set on foot a secret negotiation for peace, through the mediation of the king of Sardinia, have been already stated, nor is it to be wondered at, that the skilful managers of that negotiation were considered in France as the deliverers of their country, from the dreadful scourge of unsuccessful war, and from the rapid advances of national bankruptcy and famine.

apprehensive of the consequences, resolved by one single exertion of absolute power to put an end to this internal commotion. Accordingly, to the great surprise of the Parisians, his majesty, who scarcely ever visited the capital but upon such occasions, suddenly arrived at Paris on the 3d of March, 1766, and repairing instantly to the grand chamber of the parliament, he there held what is idly termed his *lit de justice*; but instead of a bed of justice, it has proved the very reverse, in the last two instances of its being held by Louis XV. The chambers being assembled, the king told them that he was come himself to answer all their remonstrances in person; that he should have remained silent, if the reunion of the parliaments, the indecency of their style, the temerity of their erroneous principles, and the affectation of new expressions to characterize them, had not clearly manifested the pernicious consequences of that system of union which he had already proscribed: he added, "I will not suffer an association to be formed in my kingdom, which may grow up to a confederacy of resistance." This proceeding, however, did not deter a grand deputation of the parliament of Rouen from following him the next day to Versailles with a remonstrance, in which they hinted at the dissolution of the compact between king and people, when the former violates his coronation oath. The king, without any consultation with his ministers, in the language of every despotic prince upon earth, replied, "the oath which I have taken, not to the nation, as you say, but to God, alone binds me."—He then annulled all the arrets of this parliament, as he had done those of the parliament of Paris at his *lit de justice*, passed by them in justification of the conduct of the parliaments of Pau and Brittany. We must not quit this subject without recording the laudable behaviour of the counsellors of the parliament of Brittany;(1) who, though ordered by the king to resume their functions, positively refused to plead before the new commissioners, upon which they were enrolled in the lists of the militia, when some were drafted off, by lot, to join battalions at a distance, and others were made part of the city guard.

General Lally's trial was the next object that engrossed the attention of the parliament, and of the inhabitants of Paris. You will recollect, my son, that some particulars concerning this officer, have already come under your notice in a former part of this history;(2) but his unhappy fate and the general sympathy which his sufferings excited, will justify me in presenting you with a more detailed account of him. He was the son of an emigrant Irish officer, and had distinguished himself at the battle of Fontenoy. But his ill success in the East Indies, where he was the antagonist of sir Eyre Coote, and particularly his supposed misconduct at Pondicherry, exposed him to the vehement censures of the French India company. On his return to Europe, he surrendered himself up to the bastille, where he remained a prisoner for fifteen months without being once examined. He was, however, at length tried by the parliament of Paris, for having betrayed the interests of the king and the company, although Louis considered that court an incompetent tribunal for the investigation of military concerns and affairs of state. The duke de Choiseul, having overruled the king's objections, procured the condemnation of the prisoner, not for any specific offence, but upon a general charge of criminal misconduct. He requested, as a favour, that his trial might be postponed for eight days; but his petition was refused. The day after his trial, sentence of death was passed upon him, May 6th, and he was executed on the 9th, 1766. He was gagged at the place of execution, that he might not have the opportunity of inveighing against his accuser, or of expatiating on his innocence. As he had been accused of extortion in India, three hundred thousand livres were deducted from the great mass of his property, and distributed among the poor inhabitants of Pondicherry.(3)

Every scene of this catastrophe manifested prejudice, precipitation, and a determination to shut the door against all applications for mercy. He was

(1) In France, every parliament has its special pleaders, who alone are privileged to plead causes before the respective parliaments to which they belong.

(2) See Part II. Let. XXXIV.

(3) Voltaire's Age of Louis XV. chap. 34.

undoubtedly highly culpable; but not more so than the great officers in Canada, whose punishment we have seen did not extend to life or member; but, unfortunately, Lally had blasted the sanguine hopes of both the government and the people. Individuals expected to amass princely fortunes from their East India commerce and employments, in imitation of the English; and the government aimed at a superiority of power over the British nation in the East Indies. Add to this, that Lally, in order to exculpate himself, had published some memorials, and was preparing others, which plainly discovered, that he was not the only state criminal. This step made even his judges tremble for the fate of their friends and relations. His death removed the principal evidence of their guilt, and the seizure of his papers secured them from all apprehensions of sharing his hard fate.

No other remarkable transaction happened this year, except the rejection of the mediation of Louis XV. in adjusting the internal commotions of the republic of Geneva. Their refusal to comply with the views of the French court, irritated the king to such a degree, that he ordered his minister, the chevalier de Beauteville, to talk to the commissaries of the people of Geneva, in the same style that he himself had used to his parliament at Paris. "The king, my master, prohibits you, as well as the representing citizens, all commercial intercourse with his dominions; and if, after this declaration, any of you shall presume to come within the territories of France, you will be arrested, and your merchandise will be seized and detained at his majesty's pleasure." This declaration was made by the French minister, on the 16th December, 1766. Every one knows, that the citizens of Geneva almost entirely depend on their trade with France. The sale of watches, trinkets, and a variety of other articles in the mechanic branch to the French, forms their chief support, and therefore an effectual method was taken to make them submit to an interested mediation, calculated to answer the political views of France and her allies on the continent.

The political talents of the duke de Choiseul have been the subject of much speculation in the great world, and his character has been variously represented, according to the views and interests of different parties in France and England.

The strict line of justice shall be attempted in the short sketch to which the limits of these Letters confine the author. No minister ever showed himself a truer disciple of Machiavel; ambitious, arbitrary, enterprising, resolute, and fully possessed of the spirit of intrigue. While he held the reins of government, he surmounted every difficulty, and triumphed over every obstacle to the extensive plans he had formed. The glory of the French nation, in its foreign concerns was evidently his first object, but he pursued it on the same principles of despotism, which led him to acts of tyranny at home. The natural rights of foreign petty states, or of the subjects of France, were alike sacrificed to the grand state maxim of *political necessity*, however incompatible with the law of nature and of nations, or with those legal and moral obligations which were instituted to unite prince and people in one social compact, for their mutual security and happiness. His internal administration, therefore, so far as he was concerned in the arbitrary proceedings against the parliaments of France, generally attributed to him and the chancellor Maupeau, will remain an indelible stain on his character in the eyes of all true patriots of every age and country. But in his foreign operations (though he may stand condemned in England, where the ideas of honour, equity, and moral rectitude, are carried from the private closet to the council chamber, and it is expected they should have the same influence on the conduct of sovereigns in their public transactions, as they ought to have in the common concerns of individuals), France must ever venerate him as an able statesman.

Every measure taken by this minister, from the date of the famous family-compact to the time of his dismissal, demonstrates, that he understood the true interests of his country; and that he meant to continue the peace, by strengthening the alliances of France, and by adding to her weight and in-

fluence in Europe; and we shall make it appear, that the plan he pursued could not involve him, considering the well-known situation of the other powers of Europe, in a war with any formidable enemy. In short, to the inferior courts of Europe, he spoke *en maître*, and accomplished his designs by force of arms; but to England, he held a different language, and as fast as the exhausted finances would permit him, settled amicably, the only subject of dispute likely to occasion a rupture, the liquidation of the Canada bills.

The policy of the close union of the several branches of the house of Bourbon began now to manifest itself upon more occasions than one; and it is no slender proof of Choiseul's great abilities, that though the refusal of the court of Madrid, to give any satisfactory account of the nature of this famous compact to the British ambassador, had caused a war between England and Spain, yet not the least mention of this alliance, or of its dreaded consequence, was made at the peace. It was suffered to pass unexamined by our able negotiators, as if we had lost our right to canvass every article, after a successful war against Spain, undertaken with the avowed purpose of scrutinizing the whole. The quarrel between the duke of Parma and pope Clement XIII., independent of the family-compact, was of so limited a nature, that it would have been decided without the intervention of other powers, if France had not stood engaged by the secret articles of this compact to support the pretensions of the race of Bourbon in every part of Europe. The clergy, and the religious orders in all the territories belonging to the dutchy of Parma, had enjoyed such exclusive privileges, and, in consequence, had increased to such a degree, that the revenues of the state were considerably diminished; for the ecclesiastics not only claimed an exemption from all taxes on their estates and effects, but also a power of assigning over this right to the purchasers of lands held by them. This most extraordinary and unjust privilege, occasioned fraudulent sales and conveyances, by which the state was greatly distressed, and was making such a progress, that scarce any of the lands in the dutchy would be subject to taxation, if a stop was not put to such proceedings. Respectful application had been made to the pope, to exert his authority, and to act in concert with the government of Parma, in the measures that should be taken to reform this abuse; but the pope gave no answer to the duke's memorials upon this subject, upon which he exerted his sovereign power to eradicate this evil; accordingly, he published an ordinance, which struck directly at the root of the papal authority, and entirely put an end to it in the dutchy of Parma, for it cut off all communication between the ecclesiastics and the court of Rome, and deprived all foreign priests of their benefices. The pope, on his part, had recourse to the old exploded resource of issuing out his bull against the duke, threatening him with excommunication and interdiction, if he did not restore to the clergy their ancient privileges; declaring also, that ecclesiastics are not subject to any temporal power. He went farther, for he laid claim to the sovereignty of the dutchy, though every pretension of this nature had been long since given up by his predecessors.

Secure of the interposition of France, the infant duke paid so little regard to the pope's bull, that he instantly took the most effectual method to prevent the mischief it might have occasioned. The jesuits were all seized in one night, and conducted to the confines of the pope's dominions, where they were left to shift for themselves. The other Italian courts, interested in the affairs of Parma, took fire on the publication of the pope's bull; and scarce was it known at Naples, when the king of Sicily sent a detachment of his troops to take possession of Benevento and Ponte Corvo; places belonging to the pope, but situated within the boundaries of the king's dominions. At Paris, this insolent bull met with a solemn condemnation from the parliament in full assembly. It was declared to be illegal, and highly derogatory to the honour of all sovereign powers; nor would it have found a place in this history, if it had not been the last act of papal usurpation of the supreme authority of princes, on which the curtain is now dropped for ever.

The pope persisted in his refusal to withdraw this bull, though strongly solicited by the courts of France, Spain, and Vienna: all the Roman Catholic princes of Europe took the alarm, and joined the common cause; even the republic of Venice, for once, took part against the holy see; and it is generally believed, that the grief and vexation which this unexpected stroke occasioned, hastened the death of the holy father, who now saw himself beset on every side, and his dominions invaded by different powers. It was too late to repent the insult he had offered to one of the princes of the house of Bourbon; nor was it before discovered, that if the rights of any one of the family should be invaded, the whole association would appear in arms to resist it. The pope was the first to experience the uniform operations of the compact. France revived a claim to Avignon and the Venaissin, as fiefs of that kingdom, and without waiting for a discussion of the title, took possession in virtue of a commission given by Louis XV. to the marquis de Rochevart, at the head of the regiment of Dauphiny, and to the president, and a deputation of the parliament of Paris, who jointly carried it into execution without loss of time. On the 11th of June, the French dragoons appeared before the gates of the pope's palace at Avignon, removed the old Swiss guards, kicked open the gates with their jack-boots, and entered the palace in triumph, when the marquis, in great state, received the homage of the people, in the name of the king his master, and caused the arms of France, which he had brought with him, to be affixed over the city gates; after which, the president of the parliament, with his attendants, appointed proper persons to administer justice according to the laws of France. The towns of *Carpentras* and *Cavaillon*, in the Venaissin, were given up to the French forces in the same peaceable manner, and the pope's officers, civil and military, retired to Antibes, from whence they embarked for Italy. On the other hand, the king of Sicily laid claim to the dutchies of *Castro* and *Ronciglione*, which extend almost to the environs of Rome, and publicly threatened to send commissaries, in the space of two months, supported by a sufficient military force to take possession of these dutchies, which he considered as dismembered parts of his ancient kingdom. He likewise adopted the same reformation in his dominions which had incensed the pope against the duke of Parma; the jesuits were expelled; and the king published an edict, informing his subjects, that the pope should be considered only as the first bishop of the Catholic church, and that his authority was less than that of a general council. These doctrines could not have been hazarded while the jesuits remained in the country.

To complete the misfortunes of Clement XIII., the duke of Modena laid claim to the dutchy of Ferrara, formerly the property of the house of Este, but long since ceded to the popes by treaties. In this extremity, the pope at last began to sue for peace, and solicited the court of Vienna, in the most humiliating manner, to interpose, and to use her interests to reconcile the offended house of Bourbon to the holy see.

While these revolutions were going on in favour of France and her allies in the heart of Italy, the finishing stroke was put to the independence of Corsica: the treaty concluded between the republic of Genoa and France was ratified in May; soon after which, the French court embarked twenty battalions of choice troops, together with the royal legion, for Corsica. These forces landed in June, and being met at *Bastia* by three deputies from Genoa, who had orders to deliver up the city, and all the other Genoese possessions in the island to the French commander, the French troops took possession of Bastia, hoisted the French colours on the ramparts, took down the arms of the republic, and put up those of France on the 24th: at the same time, the count de Marbeuf, their general, ordered *Te Deum* to be sung with the same solemnity as if he had gained a signal victory; the inhabitants were compelled to illuminate the city, and to give every outward demonstration of joy on the very evening of their captivity. The detail of the skirmishes and pitched battles between the French army and the brave Corsicans, in defending their liberty to the last gasp, engaged the attention of all Europe during the re-

But some circumstances, perhaps, not so well known, contributed as much or more than any other events, to determine the duke de Choiseul, an able statesman, to purchase an interval of repose to his bleeding country, at the expense even of the most valuable sacrifices.

A general dislike to the service manifested itself in every department, civil and military, connected with the war. Officers and magistrates employed under the government, in its remote dependencies, oppressed and plundered the people, but paid no regard to the public security of the countries over which they presided. A spirit of opposition to the measures of administration, chiefly owing to the misfortunes of the war, prevailed at home; and the difficulty of raising money for the public service increased every hour. The most honourable offices were publicly refused, and no man of abilities could be found to undertake the conduct of the future operations of the war.

Add to this, the expiring influence of the jesuits, which was exerted with redoubled force, on the eve of its total extinction. Actuated by the infernal principles of revenge, they secretly thwarted the designs of an adverse court, and stirred up the people to complain bitterly of the weight of the taxes, the extortions of the farmers-general, and the universal mal-administration of public affairs.

In short, scarcely was the peace signed, when, notwithstanding the almost frantic joy it occasioned throughout the kingdom, a most formidable opposition to the court broke forth, and even the officers of justice, under an immediate dependence on the crown, refused to register the king's edicts, in the parliament of Paris, for continuing some taxes (which should have been abolished at the expiration of the war), for imposing new ones, and for vesting a power in the king to redeem the public debts at twenty years' purchase.

The example of the parliament of Paris was followed by almost all the parliaments of France, whose remonstrances upon this occasion would do honour to the most distinguished patriots, in the freest constitutions of civil government upon earth.

As the latent seeds of these internal commotions had undoubtedly hastened the negotiations for peace, so now their maturity served to guarantee the powers of Europe from any hostile designs of the court of France, for some years at least: but they produced no effect in favour of the people; for the parliaments, after repeated struggles in defence of their violated rights, in which they went so far as to proceed against their governors as public criminals, were obliged to submit at length to those irresistible ministers of despotism, the military.

However, this violent contest by no means diverted the attention of the people from another object, which, though it was but a poor compensation for the losses of individuals and of the public, during a long war, afforded general satisfaction to the whole kingdom; this was the trial and punishment of several delinquents, whose perfidy, cowardice, or venality had contributed to increase the misfortunes of the state. In the month of December, 1763, most of the public officers in the late government of Canada were condemned, some to a temporary, others to a perpetual banishment; and all were obliged to refund the immense sums of which they had defrauded the nation, amounting in the whole to 12,965,000 livres. And as this capital sum had been chiefly purloined from the supplies for the army and marine forces employed in the defence of Canada, it was presumed, that if it had been honestly expended in the public service, the English would not have met with such signal success in that country; and, indeed, a review of the stations of the delinquents in some measure justifies this rational conjecture. The intendant of the province, the purveyor-general of the army, the director and the comptroller of the marine, the commissaries and the keepers of the stores were the chief criminals. That these should escape with life is a strong impeachment of the execution of justice in France; but it must be remembered, that Madame Pompadour was still living, and that they were all officers appointed through her interest, and protected by her and her friends to the last.

From the produce of the fines, it was reasonably expected, the French

ministry would be enabled to pay the Canada bills, drawn by the late intendant, and the other guilty officers on the government of France, and given in payment to the Canadians, now become the subjects of Great Britain; yet, in violation of the solemn declaration of his most Christian majesty at the peace, that the bills of exchange, drawn by the late government of Canada on Old France, should be honourably discharged, this piece of justice was refused, notwithstanding the strong application made by the English merchants trading to Canada, who were now the holders of these bills, having taken them in the course of their commercial concerns with that country, on the faith of the king's declaration. A long and feeble negotiation on the part of the British ministry commenced, in consequence of the remonstrances of the proprietors of these bills, which might have produced a fresh rupture, had it not been for the very pacific disposition of the British court.

But another incident plainly discovered, that the refusal of the payment of the Canada bills was owing, at that time, to the exhausted state of the French finances. In the month of February, 1764, a declaration was made to their East India company, on the part of the king, that his majesty could no longer afford them any assistance, notwithstanding their great losses; and that they must either provide for the payment of their debts, or dissolve the company. This measure partly decided the fate of a commercial association, which, at one time, promised to rival those of other countries, and to yield considerable succours to the crown on extraordinary emergencies. It is true, this company subsisted after this declaration, but in the most fluctuating and enfeebled state.

We are now brought, in the order of time, to a domestic event of another nature, from which as great revolutions were expected in the internal government of France, as if a new monarch had ascended the throne,—the death of the king's favourite mistress and prime minister. It happened on the 15th of April, 1764, in the forty-third year of her age.

It has often been the fate of France to be governed, for a long series of years, by the mistresses of its kings. The uncontrollable influence of Madame Pompadour lasted upwards of twenty years, during which time various attempts were made to ruin her; and though persons of the highest rank, and of the most distinguished merit in the kingdom, frequently engaged in well-concerted plans, to remove her from court, they always ended in the disgrace, and sometimes in the punishment of the authors. One unhappy victim, *Madame Suaré*, very early experienced the implacability of this imperious mistress. On a public day of showing the duke of Burgundy, the dauphin's eldest son, then an infant, to the people, occasion was taken to conceal a packet, sealed up, in the prince's cradle. Madame Suaré, who was in waiting, upon taking up the child, discovered this packet, and being either really overcome with fear, or affecting it, gave a violent scream, which brought Madame de Tallard instantly into the room, who, without loss of time, carried the packet to the king. It contained an anonymous remonstrance against the mal-administration of public affairs, and the king's neglect of the national welfare, wholly attributed to his criminal connexion with Pompadour, and her assiduity to absorb him in trifling effeminate amusements. The irresolute monarch, for a short interval, appeared to be deeply struck with remorse; but after he had consulted his female minister (the object of the just invectives of his subjects), pride and resentment stifled the reflections of wisdom and virtue, and the incensed mistress, to deter others from the like dangerous attempts, procured an order to send *Suaré* to the bastille, on a strong presumption, that she had conveyed the packet into the cradle; what became of this unfortunate woman remains unknown to this hour. More interesting transactions prevent our entering farther into the character of Madame Pompadour; and indeed it may suffice to observe, that she enjoyed all but the title of queen-regent of France; for the easy, indolent Louis seemed to be at the head of no other party in his kingdom, but that which formed his *petit soupers*, calculated to engage him in a perpetual succession of intoxicating pleasures, formed by the luxuriant taste of his mistress, whose immediate dependants were the most constant guests.

As the king was far advanced in life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age, when he lost his favourite mistress, it was reasonably concluded, that the future glory of France would solely occupy his thoughts, and that the remainder of his life would be chiefly dedicated to public business. But this flattering prospect soon vanished, when it was found that the king continued in his service, and gave his confidence to the minions and tools of that extraordinary woman. In this situation we must leave the state of the palace of Versailles, while we attend to the other transactions of this period worthy of notice.

The French ministry had, for some time past, formed a secret plan to get possession of Corsica, under the open profession of assisting the Genoese government, incapable of itself, to defend those parts of the island which it still possessed. A more favourable opportunity could not present itself; the supporters of the liberties of Europe, and of the political balance of power, either exhausted of men and money by the late war, or firmly resolved not to involve themselves in any fresh broils, when they had scarce recovered breath from the last, tamely beheld the military operations of France against Corsica, without tendering the least succour to the brave inhabitants, who, the instant they received intelligence of the designs of the court of France, called an assembly, composed of deputies from all the provinces of the island, and with a noble firmness, becoming a manly race of free-born citizens, resolved that the French troops should not be permitted to land on the island, on any pretence whatever. And that no decent measure on their part might be neglected, they ordered their commander-in-chief, *Pascal Paoli*, to make the most respectful remonstrance to his most Christian majesty, against the unchristian conduct of his ministry, in sending French troops to aid and assist the avowed enemies of their civil freedom and independence; the preservation of which they had hitherto successfully contended for, and were now on the eve of perpetuating, having nearly driven the Genoese off the island.

Neither these remonstrances to Louis XV., celebrated by some writers for his humanity and love of justice, nor the memorials despatched to courts supposed to be interested in the independence of Corsica, imploring, if not succours, at least their mediation with France, produced any effect. The French forces landed in Corsica, as auxiliaries to the Genoese; but they finally convinced the injured inhabitants, that they were destined to conquer, and to retain possession of the country: accordingly, we shall see Corsica annexed to the crown of France, by an act of cession from the Genoese republic, in the year 1768; but the Genoese not having the least shadow of right to consign over these brave people, like a bale of merchandise. Though the powers of Europe, from political motives, have hitherto acquiesced in this tyrannic invasion of the rights of mankind, it is not to be doubted, that at some future period, *Pascal Paoli*, or a more worthy hero, who will consult less his own personal safety, will be empowered to restore the freedom of this enslaved country.

The year 1765 was opened by a finance operation, which partly restored the credit of the court of France in England. The French ambassador at London tendered the payment of £670,000, as a compensation for the maintenance of the French prisoners in different parts of the British empire, during the course of the last war. By the advice of parliament, this sum was accepted, and £130,000 was immediately paid on account; the remainder was to be cleared by instalments of £40,000 every three months: and some hopes being given that the Canada bills would likewise be adjusted amicably, the price of these bills, which had been sold by auction at thirty per cent. discount, increased considerably. Soon after, the king gave a convincing proof of the goodness of his heart; for, the widow and children of the unfortunate Calas, having gained their cause in the parliament of Paris against their inhuman, bigoted persecutors, exactly three years after the execution of their innocent father, his majesty not only ordered the re-establishment of the reputation of that unhappy victim of superstitious fury to be printed and published in all parts of the kingdom, but he made the widow

a present of 18,000 livres, to her two daughters he gave 6000 livres each, and to one of her sons 3000, without depriving them of their expectations of great damages from the judges who first condemned their father.

No alteration happened in the political state of France at this period; but proper resentment was shown to the emperor of Morocco, who had refused to punish a Sallee rover for seizing a French trading vessel: a squadron of ten ships of the line, under the command of M. de Chassaut, bombarded Sallee from the 31st of May to the 14th of June, throwing into the old and new towns upwards of four hundred shells, but with little effect. They afterward attacked Larrache, but without success; for they met with a warm reception from the Moors, who suffered the French to advance in their boats, and to burn some vessels without opposition, and then swam to them from the shore with poniards in their mouths, and obliged them to beg for quarter. The bashaw gave orders to preserve the lives of the prisoners, but took all the French boats, and would listen to no terms of accommodation, so that M. de Chassaut found himself under the necessity to put an end to this expedition, without obtaining any satisfaction for the present.

A domestic event interrupted the usual gayety of the court of Versailles, in the last month of this year, 1765, and involved the whole kingdom in a deep universal sorrow: the dauphin of France, father of Louis XVI., died at Fontainebleau, December 20th, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, leaving the character of an inoffensive, good-natured man, too much attached indeed to the priesthood, and particularly to the jesuits, whose society, it is conjectured, he would have restored in France, if he had ascended the throne soon after its dissolution; but the moral tenor of his conduct gave the people room to hope they should be freed at least from the capricious government of worthless women. The care he took of the education of his children, and particularly his endeavours to preserve them from pride and arrogance, with which the minds of young princes are but too early tainted, either by self-interested courtiers, or by the example of royal *hauteur*, does honour to his memory. It is related of him, that he made his children look over the baptismal register in which their names are entered, by the custom of France, indiscriminately with others, and that he made the following remark to the princes, his sons: "Behold your names intermixed, without distinction, with those of the children of the poor and needy: religion and nature place all men upon a level; virtue alone can make any essential distinction between them, and perhaps the child whose name precedes each of yours in this register will be greater in the sight of God than you will ever be in the eyes of the people of France." At another time, he ordered them to be carried to the cottage of a poor peasant: "I will have them see the black bread that they eat; I insist on their handling the straw which serves the poor for a bed. Learn them to weep," said he to their governor, "a prince who has never shed tears cannot make a good king." When an augmentation of his appointments were offered him by the late king, he politely refused, and wished that the sum proposed might be taken off annually from the taxes on the poor. It has been suggested that he was too good to live; but as his public capacity for government was not so distinguishable as his private virtues, it cannot be imagined there was any political necessity to cut him off; though in countries where Machiavelian politics prevail, the life of a prince is more precarious than that of a peasant.

It has been already observed, that the parliaments of France had been obliged to submit to military force, but the time was now come not only to make them obey every arbitrary mandate of the court, but effectually to put a stop to all remonstrances, or applications to the throne of any kind, to obtain the restoration of their rights and privileges. The parliament of Brittany having been actually dissolved for their spirited measures, and a new commission consisting of sixty members appointed by the king having been vested with the authority of that senate, the other parliaments presented fresh remonstrances to the king in more determined language, and the parliament of Paris was proceeding to still bolder measures, when the king,