

Sunday.)

ne, "I can say  
o such great  
and path is net  
as much in their  
were lying bound  
waited, therefore,  
planned how the  
it be dealt with on

ronnay-Charente ex-  
best that we should

to name the place,  
Chargny or my own  
Joseph in the Faubourg  
that matter where the  
then once the sun has  
rom it? At least he  
and I shall live in the  
of the days when none  
men us and when your  
all my own. Be happy,  
r, and think no more of  
out the foolish gossip of  
your life lies in the fu-  
in the past. Adieu, dear  
She threw forward her  
as dimmed over, and she  
then had Louis not sprung  
I caught her in his arms.  
al head drooped upon his  
breath was warm upon  
id the subtle scent of her  
as nostrils. Her broad  
was thrown back, her  
sed, her lips just parted  
ow the line of pearly  
autiful face not three  
s own. And then sud-  
s quivered, and the  
s looked up at him lov-  
ly, half deprecating,  
her whole soul in a  
move? Or was it she?  
But their lips had  
s and then in another  
solutions were stream-  
Louis like autumn  
wind.

ot to go! You would  
heart to send me away,  
it you must not annoy me.

die than cause you an  
Oh, sire, I have seen  
ately! And I love you  
adened me. And then  
woman"—

ust not speak against her.  
ivil for your sake even to  
low of old Scarron."  
you must be civil. I can-  
y unpleasantness."  
will stay with me, sire?"  
e arms collid themselves  
k. Then she held him for  
arm's length to feast her  
face, and then drew him  
ward her. "You will not  
r sire. It is so long since  
n here."  
," said he.

carriage, dear sire, at the  
en very harsh with you.  
ou will forgive me. Have  
d pencil, that I may coun-  
order?"  
here, sire, upon the side  
ve also a note which, if I  
you for an instant, I will  
nterroom."

out with triumph in her  
been a terrible fight, but  
or the credit of her vic-  
ok a little pink slip of  
a field desk and dashed  
ads upon it. They were,  
ok, de Maintenon have any  
or his majesty he will be  
et few hours in the room of  
Montespan. This she ad-  
to her rival, and it was sent  
spot, together with the king's  
y the hands of a page.

CHAPTER VIII.  
OR nearly a week the king was  
constant to his new humor.  
The routine of his life remained  
unchanged, save that it was the  
of the frail beauty rather than of  
de Maintenon which attracted  
in the afternoon. And in sym-  
with this sudden relapse into his  
life his coats lost something of  
somber hue. His walk was brisk-  
nd he gave a youthful flourish to  
ane as a defiance to those who  
seen in his reformation the first  
toms of age.

d as the king brightened, so all  
great court brightened too. The  
ns began to resume their former  
ndor, and gay coats and glittering  
woidery which had lain in drawers  
years were seen once more in the  
s of the palace. The Montespan  
room was crowded every morning  
n men and women who had some-  
to be urged, while her rival's  
ubers were as deserted as they  
ed before the king first turned  
scious look upon her. Faces which  
I been long banished from the court  
an to reappear in the corridors and  
dens unchecked and unrebuked,  
the black cassock of the Jesuit  
the purple soutane of the bishop  
less frequent colors in the royal

the church party was never se-  
y alarmed at this relapse. The  
eyes of priest or of prelate fol-  
Louis in his escapade as wary  
non might watch a young deer  
gamboles about in the meadow  
the impression that it is maste-

his friend.

To this end it was that his confessor,  
Pere la Chaise, and Bossuet, the great  
bishop of Meaux, waited one morning  
upon Mme. de Maintenon in her cham-  
ber. With a globe beside her, she was  
endeavoring to teach geography to the  
lame Duc du Maine and the mischiev-  
ous little Comte de Toulouse, who had  
enough of their father's disposition to  
make them averse to learning and of  
their mother's to cause them to hate  
any discipline or restraint.

Mme. de Maintenon dismissed her  
two pupils and received the ecclesi-  
astics with the mixture of affection  
and respect which was due to those  
who were not only personal friends,  
but great lights of the Gallican church.  
The last few days had cast a pallor  
over her face which spiritualized and  
refined the features, but she wore un-  
impaired her expression of sweet se-  
renity.

"I see, my dear daughter, that you  
have sorrowed," said Bossuet, glanc-  
ing at her with a kindly and yet search-  
ing eye.

"I have indeed, your grace. All last  
night I spent in prayer that this trial  
may pass away from us."

"And yet you have no need for fear,  
madame—none, I assure you. Others  
may think that your influence has  
ceased, but we, who know the king's  
heart, think otherwise. A few days  
may pass, a few weeks at the most,  
and once more it will be upon your  
rising fortunes that every eye in  
France will turn."

The lady's brow clouded, and she  
glanced at the prelate as though his  
speech were not altogether to her taste.  
"I trust that pride does not lead me  
astray," she said. "But if I can read  
my own soul aright there is no thought  
of myself in the grief which now tears  
my heart. It is for the king I grieve,  
for the noble heart, the kindly soul,  
which might rise so high and which is  
dragged so low."

"For all that, my daughter, you are  
ambitious. Would you not love to  
turn the king toward good?"

"I would give my life for it."  
"And there is your ambition. Ah,  
can I not read your noble soul? Would  
you not love to see the church reign  
pure and serene over all this realm, to  
see the poor housed, the needy help-  
ed, the wicked turned from their ways and  
the king ever the leader in all that is  
noble and good?"

Her cheeks had flushed, and her eyes  
shone as she looked at the gray face  
of the Jesuit and saw the picture  
which his words had conjured up be-  
fore her.

"My daughter," said Bossuet solemn-  
ly, "it is time for plain speaking. It  
is in the interests of the church that  
we do it. None hear and none shall  
ever hear what passes between us now.  
Regard us, if you will, as two confessors,  
with whom your secret is inviolable.  
I call it a secret, and yet it is  
none to us, for it is our mission to read  
the human heart. You love the king."  
"Your grace—father!" She turned in  
confusion from one to the other.

"There is no shame in loving, my  
daughter. The shame lies only in  
yielding to love. I say again that you  
love the king."

"At least I have never told him so,"  
she faltered.

"And will you never?"

"May heaven wither my tongue first!"

"But consider, my daughter. Such  
love in a soul like yours is heaven's  
gift and sent for some wise purpose.  
We speak for the interests of the holy  
church, and those interests demand  
that you should marry the king."

"Marry the king?" The little room  
swam round her. "Marry the king?"  
"There lies the best hope for the fu-  
ture. We see in you a second Jeanne  
d'Arc who will save both France and  
France's king."

Madame sat silent for a few mo-  
ments. Her face had regained its com-  
posure, and her eyes were bent vac-  
antly upon her tapestry frame as she  
turned over in her mind all that was  
involved in the suggestion.

"But surely—surely this could never  
be," she said at last. "What king of  
France has married a subject? See  
how every princess of Europe stretches  
out her hand to him. The queen of  
France must be of queenly blood, even  
as the last was."

"All this may be overcome."

"And then there are the reasons of  
state. If the king marry, it should be  
to form a powerful alliance, to ce-  
ment a friendship with a neighbor na-  
tion or to gain some province which  
may be the bride's dowry. What is  
my dowry? A widow's pension and a  
workbox."

"Your dowry, my daughter, would  
be those gifts of body and of mind  
with which heaven has endowed you.  
The king has money enough and the  
king has provinces enough. As to the  
state, how can the state be better  
served than by the assurance that the  
king will be saved in future from such  
sights as are to be seen in this palace  
today?"

"Oh, if it could be so! But think,  
father; think of those about him—the  
dauphin, monsieur his brother, his  
ministers. You know how little this  
would please them and how easy it is  
for them to sway his mind."  
"The faces of the two ecclesiastics  
who had dismissed her other objections  
with a smile and a wave clouded over

BY THIS.  
"My daughter," said the Jesuit grave-  
ly, "that is a matter which you may  
leave to the church. It may be that  
we, too, have some power over the  
king's mind and that we may lead him  
in the right path, even though those  
of his own blood would fain have it  
otherwise. The future only can show  
with whom the power lies. But you?  
Love and duty both draw you one way

now, and the church may count upon  
you and you upon the church. It will  
serve you if you in turn will but serve  
it."

"What higher wish could I have?"  
"You will be our daughter, our queen,  
our champion, and you will heal the  
wounds of the suffering church. The  
Huguenots must go. They must be  
driven forth. The goats must be di-  
vided from the sheep. The king is al-  
ready in two minds. Louvois is our  
friend now. If you are with us, then  
all will be well."

"But, father, think how many there  
are! And think, too, of their sufferings  
should they be driven forth?"

"Their cure lies in their own hands."

"That is true. And yet my heart  
softens for them."

Pere la Chaise and the bishop shook  
their heads.

"You would befriend God's enemies,  
then?"

"No, no; not if they are indeed so."

"Can you doubt it? Is it possible  
that your heart still turns toward the  
heresy of your youth?"

"No, father; but it is not in nature to  
forget that my father and my grand-  
father—"

"Nay; they have answered for their  
own sins. Is it possible that the church  
has been mistaken in you? Do you,  
then, refuse the first favor which she  
asks of you? You would accept her  
aid, and yet you would give none in  
return."

Mme. de Maintenon rose with the air  
of one who has made her resolution.  
"You are wiser than I," said she, "and  
to you have been committed the inter-  
ests of the church. I will do what you  
advise."

"You promise it?"

"I do."

Her two visitors threw up their hands  
together. "It is a blessed day," they  
cried, "and generations yet unborn will  
learn to deem it so."

She sat half stunned by the prospect  
which was opening up in front of her.  
Ambitious she had, as the Jesuit had  
surmised, always been—ambitious for  
the power which would enable her to  
leave the world better than she found  
it. But close at the heels of her joy  
there came a sudden revulsion to  
doubt and despondency. Was not all  
this fine prospect a mere day dream?  
And how could these men be so sure  
that they held the king in the hollow  
of their hand? The Jesuit read the  
fears which dulled the sparkle of her  
eyes, and answered her thoughts.

"The church redeems its pledges  
swiftly," said he. "And you, my  
daughter, you must be as prompt when  
your own turn comes."

"I have promised, father."

"Then it is for us to perform. You  
will remain in your room all evening."

"Yes, father."

"The king already hesitates. I spoke  
with him this morning, and his mind  
was full of blackness and despair. His  
better self turns in disgust from his  
sins. I have to see and speak with  
him once more, and I go from your  
room to his. And when I have spoken  
he will come from his room to yours,  
or I have studied his heart for twenty  
years in vain." They bowed low to  
her, both together, and left her to her  
thoughts.

An hour passed, and then a second  
one, as she sat in her fauteuil, her  
tapestry before her, but her hands list-  
less upon her lap, waiting for her fate.  
Her life's future was now being set-  
tled for her, and she was powerless to



turn in one way or the other. Day-  
light turned to the pearly light of eve-  
ning, and that again to dusk, but she  
still sat waiting in the shadow. At  
last, however, there came a quick,  
sharp tread, crisp and authoritative,  
which brought her to her feet with  
flushed cheeks and her heart beating  
wildly. The door opened, and she saw  
outlined against the gray light of the  
outer passage the erect and graceful  
figure of the king.  
"Sire, one instant and mademoiselle  
will light the lamp."  
"Do not call her." He entered and  
closed the door behind him. "Francoise,  
the dusk is welcome to me because it  
screens me from the reproaches which  
must lie in your glance even if your  
tongue be too kindly to utter them."  
(To Be Continued.)

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