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The Social Spirit of the Age of Louis XIV: 1650 - 1714

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THE SOCIAL SPIRIT OF THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV

1650 -- 1715

by

EDWARD JOSEPH LALLY

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PREFACE

The Age of Louis XIV, as historians have chosen to name the period between 1650 and 1715, stands out as a unique period in the history of Western Europe. This era of some sixty-five years shows the results of a number of movements which took place in the sixteenth century and earlier. The religious unity of former centuries, destroyed by the Reformation, was replaced by a number of national churches. Out of the religious controversies which raged throughout Europe during the sixteenth century came the "isms" of the Age of Louis XIV. The Wars of Religion which marked the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries left an economic and cultural setback in their wake as a bequeathal to the following era. Scientific discoveries and religious bickerings gave rise to a spirit of skepticism toward all things supernatural, to an air of contempt for the past, to an attitude of rebellion against authority. The economic and social conditions of the seventeenth century gave an impulse to a formal artificiality in the realms of literature and art. The spread of educational facilities increased the number of men who

could call themselves, "learned", and in turn gave rise to a spirit of criticism toward all things authoritative or medieval. The diversity of these movements seems to hinder any unity of design, but out of this atmosphere emerges the brilliant, though artificial Age of Louis XIV. To gather and evaluate the various elements that entered into the composition of this epoch in history is the purpose of this discussion.

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Edward J. Lally

Chicago, June 1941

THE SOCIAL SPIRIT OF THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV

1650-1715

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CHAPTER 1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAROQUE ART
The meaning of Baroque --
Where the Baroque style
flourished -- Characteristics
of Baroque -- Artificiality --
Worldliness -- Magnificence --
Characteristics of Baroque
society.

CHAPTER I

The art of a people expresses the idealism of that people; consequently, it has always been a means of judging the social life of an age. In ancient Greece we find that the people expended their wealth primarily in the architectural splendor of their temples and we know that the Greeks were predominantly religious minded. When we consider that the Romans were the legal masters of antiquity it is not a surprise to find that they lavished their wealth in the architecture of the Forum and Curia. We know that the people of the Middle Ages were religious minded, that they set a high value upon their spiritual welfare; the Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages express clearly this spirit of other-worldliness. In our country the bank, the commercial building, and the state capitol show that we are a commercially and politically minded people. Thus we may look to the art of the Age of Louis XIV to find the keynote of that era.

The art which flourished during the age of Louis XIV gives a clear picture of that age. A study of the Baroque style of art reveals three principal characteristics, artificiality, worldliness, and

magnificence.¹ A study of the society which inspired this type of art shows that the same characteristics are present. Thus we find in this era that a clear picture of the ideals and desires of the society may be found firmly expressed in the art which it favored.

What do art critics think of the Baroque style? The answer to this question is found in the definitions of the word, Baroque, given by different critics.

Corrado Ricci found three definitions for the word:

"A pretentious and eccentric style which came into vogue at the end of the sixteenth and lasted throughout the eighteenth century".

"A capricious style prevalent in Italy from 1750 to about 1760".

"The style which for two centuries heaped together all the products of the three kingdoms of nature".²

Joseph Pijoan defines Baroque in an equally critical manner, "By Baroque, then, we mean a presentation of ideas and details in which the forms are not logical".³

1 Corrado Ricci, Baroque Architecture and Sculpture in Italy (London, 1912), Introduction, v.

2 Ricci, introduction, vi.

3 Joseph Pijoan, History of Art, (New York and London, 1928), 111, 339.

Briggs says that the word, Baroque, probably comes from the Latin word, "Verruca", meaning, "Wart", a word which jewellers used to designate an ill-shaped pearl, "Barocea", and which later came to be applied to the "fantastic, the bizarre, and the decadent in art".⁴ Such definitions serve to exemplify the attitude of art critics toward the Baroque style.

Baroque art flourished during the Age of Louis XIV in most of the European countries. Its beginnings may be traced back to the sixteenth century with such artists as Michelangelo, Corregio, Sansovino, and Vignola attempting to add pomp and splendor to their work. During the period of the Counter Reformation the Baroque style gained a foothold in Rome and then spread to other countries. In Spain the Baroque artists received the name, "Churrigueresque", because of their adherence to the style of the famed Spanish artist, Churriguera. In Italy, Spain, and Portugal, the Baroque artists went to extremes in decoration. The style spread to France in the late seventeenth century, and also gained a foothold in Austria, Prussia, Russia, and England. Art critics of the latter country pride themselves in the fact that the Baroque was slow

4 Martin Shaw Briggs, Baroque Architecture, (London, 1913), 127.

in coming to their country, and that it did not get a good foothold there.⁵

The outstanding characteristics of the Baroque style of art are its artificiality, worldliness, and magnificence. These characteristics are seen in all the countries in which the style flourished. The architecture of the Baroque buildings exemplifies the characteristic of artificiality. The tombs, buildings, palaces, and churches furnish fine examples of the characteristic of worldliness, and the buildings and castles of the period, especially the castle of Versailles, show plainly the characteristic of magnificence.

Baroque art and architecture were artificial in tone. Every architectural work has some idea to express, usually a noble one. But the Baroque buildings had no such noble sentiments behind them. Some express ideas of strength or pride, while others go so far as to express conceit or a jest.⁶ Most of the Baroque castles have the idea of wealth firmly expressed in every line and corner of the building, in such a manner that onlookers must be impressed. In the doorways and balconies of buildings artists often used

5 Pijoan, 439.

6 Briggs, 217.

large shields and coats of arms, upon which monsters, human figures, and animals would be intertwined, twisting and struggling to get free. Such an artificial decoration would be surrounded by flowers, fruit, sea-shells, and coral.⁷ In many of the Baroque buildings the artists made use of wavy entablatures, twisted columns, and spiral brackets and volutes in order to make the style more decorative, but in doing so, they also made it artificial.⁸ Many of the Baroque buildings had confused ornamentation. This was due to the minute attention given to minor details, which were decorated without relationship to the rest of the building. Pijoan says that Baroque architecture lacked respect for every law of statics and dynamics.⁹ Especially artificial in Baroque art were the water fountains in the gardens surrounding the castles. These show that Baroque artists were capable of producing fantastic conceptions. Artists had the water gush from the mouth of a god, monster, Triton, Siren, Neptune, a serpent, dolphin, horse, lion, or from an eagle's beak, or a dragon's jaw, or the hair of a nymph.¹⁰ Artificial traits were common during the Baroque period, but the

7 Ricci, introduction, xi.

9 Pijoan, lll, 350.

8 Pijoan, lll, 387.

10 Ricci, introduction, xi.

classic example of artificiality was the Louvre. This magnificent building, designed by Claude Perrault (1633-1688) had a great Corinthian colonnade six hundred feet long, with double columns and a high central pediment and terminal pavilions. The facades of the Louvre were among the most imposing in Europe, but were mere decoration. They had no practical relationship to the rest of the building.¹¹ Other buildings were also artificial, especially on the exterior. The palace of Versailles is described by Saint-Simon as the dullest of all places, a palace built on and on, without design or convenience.¹² Huggins says that the palace of Versailles was "a feelingless and prosaic conglomeration of architectural and sculptural forms, without unity either of style or composition."¹³

A second characteristic of Baroque art was its worldliness. The tombs of the Baroque period serve to exemplify the pomp and worldliness of the art as a

11 Hamlin, A.D.F., A Text-Book of the History of Architecture. (New York, 1930), 336.

12 Saint-Simon, Duke de, The Memoirs of the Duke of Saint-Simon, (Tr. by Bayle Saint John), (New York, 1907), vol. 111, 232.

13 Huggins, Samuel, The Course and Current of Architecture, (London, 1863), 125.

whole. Ricci says that it became common to introduce a multitude of allegorical or symbolical figures in the tombs, around which artists often placed many genii and feminine figures with plump forms and smiling faces, a characteristic of gross worldliness. He adds that artists also used skeletons and death's heads which peered out from the sides of the tombs with terrifying and grotesque grins upon their faces.¹⁴ The spirit of worldliness is seen especially in the fields of sculpture. The statues no longer were representations of religious subjects, saints and angels, but were representations of Greek and Roman divinities or of ordinary men and women with all their worldly attributes. When a sculptor did revert to religious subjects he paganized them. The churches of the Baroque period generally expressed the same spirit of worldliness which was characteristic of all Baroque architecture. Briggs says that the Baroque produced the very opposite effect from that inspired by Gothic architecture, self-sacrifice. He adds that the chief defect of the Baroque lies in its blatant materialism.¹⁵ He sums up the worldliness of the Baroque churches in a harsh manner:

14 Pijoan, 111, 369.

15 Briggs, 127.

"The great churches built throughout Catholic Europe during the Counter Reformation were the result of spiritual exaltation. The extravagant altars expressed a joy in the defeat of heresy as well as a delight in the brilliant hues of marble. But the phase which followed, Baroque, cannot be connected with religion. It is not necessary to read Bernini's life to obtain an insight into his taste for worldly things; a study of his Pagan Madonnas is sufficient. The angels and cupids scattered around his churches are a direct negation of monastic ideals in every line of their plump and supple forms. It was similar throughout Europe. Baroque churches as a whole are the least devotional in the world." 16

The worldliness of Baroque art is exemplified more fully in the realm of painting. The Spanish painter, Ribera, was fond of painting poorly clad, gaunt bodies, half-naked philosophers, penitents, and martyred saints flayed or covered with bleeding wounds. Previously artists had used well-dressed, aristocratic members of society as models for their pictures when they saw fit to depart from religious subjects. Pijoan says that Ribera's art is founded upon nature, plain and unembellished.¹⁷ The Baroque master of German painting, Rubens, reveals the characteristic of worldliness very plainly in his work. He raised up a new artistic ideal in the person of his second wife, Helena Fourment, a woman who was devoid of any great show of intelligence, but who

16 Briggs, 219.

17 Pijoan, 111, 419.

was "plump and blond".¹⁸ Rubens had an enormous influence upon the painters of his own day, but art critics now consider him superficial.¹⁹

The Baroque style also expressed magnificence. This characteristic may be seen in the buildings of Italy, Spain, and France erected during the seventeenth century. The city-states of Italy were in a state of decay, a result of the Commercial Revolution. However, many of the old families were still rich, and they wanted to show their power and wealth in the magnificence of their dwellings. The outstanding achievement of the century in the architectural field, is, of course, the famous palace of Louis XIV's at Versailles. Kingsley describes the magnificence of Versailles as follows:

"And nowhere has internal decoration been carried to a further point of perfection than at Versailles. It may be all wrong in the eyes of the architectural purist, but for sheer magnificence of effect -- for actual beauty and richness of detail in marbles and painting, in gilded stucco, carved wood, superb gilt bronze, on all of which the greatest artists of the day did not disdain to work -- it cannot be surpassed. Take for example the Salon de Mars. The modillions of the grand golden cornice are empty casques. And in the coverings of the ceilings are golden trophies, and lovely cupids in gilt stucco riding eagles and taming lions. While golden oak wreaths

18 Pijoan, 111, 458.

19 Pijoan, 111, 460.

frame the paintings of the ceiling, by Audran, of Mars in his chariot drawn by wolves. Or, again, the Salon de Appollon, with its ceiling by Lafosse; and its golden wreaths hanging right out from the ceiling, and the winged muses of extreme beauty, on which the great sculptor Coysevox did not refuse to work."

"But all this glory of decorative art culminates in the Grande Galerie, dite des Glaces, and the Salons de la Guerre et de la Paix, which form its two extremities. Here decoration, with one object ever in view-- the glorification of the King, can scarcely be carried further ... While in the Salon de la Guerre, in Coysevox's immortal bas relief, the King, young, radiant, triumphant, tramples nations in chains under his horse's feet."

"Such were the tendencies of architecture and decorative art under the "roi-soleil". Without, severely classical; within, the utmost magnificence and luxury of the Rocco style."²⁰

The palace of Versailles, however, was not the only magnificent building of the Baroque period. One of the King's ministers, Fouquet, drew Louis XIV's displeasure because he had a castle erected which was a rival of the king's in magnificence. Fouquet's castle built at Vaux is said to have been truly magnificent.²¹ Lesser nobles vied with each other in an effort to make their buildings more magnificent. Men and women of the seventeenth century were especially interested

²⁰ Rose Kingsley, A History of French Art, (New York, 1899), 163-5.

²¹ Jacques Boulenger, The Seventeenth Century, (New York, 1920), 328.

in the exterior of their homes and castles. Particularly important was the doorway of the structure. Briggs says that however mean were the rooms within the house, an owner saw to it that a stranger was duly impressed with externals and squandered all available resources on heraldry and sculpture above his lintel.²² In those buildings in which the owners could afford to pay attention to the interior, there were noticeable changes intended for the public eye. The principal rooms grew larger and galleries and libraries more ambitious. Moreover, the staircase became the central feature of every great house and assumed an importance unknown before.

The three characteristics of Baroque art, artificiality, worldliness, and magnificence, tell us that the society which sponsored that art had identical characteristics.

It is certain that the people of the seventeenth century lived in an artificial atmosphere. We find this characteristic especially among the higher classes in the cities and at the Court. The famous French salons were noted for the flowery, artificial language of the people who gathered in them. The lesser nobles

22 Briggs, 127.

tried to maintain their dignity by appearing to be rich and powerful, but in reality many of them had neither riches nor power. Famous for its artificiality was the life of the nobles at Court. The rules of precedence and etiquette which emanated from the Court went to absurd extremes. The whole life of the nobles was one of show. Thus the quality of artificiality in the Baroque art was a true representation of the society.

Seventeenth century society was also noted for its worldliness. In France up to 1686 when the king came under the domination of Madame de Maintenon the attitude of the nobles toward religion was one of indifference. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) the king of France dictated the religion of his subjects. The courtiers conformed outwardly to his demands, but real religious fervor was absent. The spirit of worldliness is seen also in the amusements of the Court. The courtiers spent their time at gambling, hunting, dancing, and cursing. The latter was considered an accomplishment in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. The higher clergy were also worldly. Many of the bishops and cardinals spent their time at Court in much the same manner that courtiers did. Their lives were direct contradictions of their religious offices.

The magnificence of Baroque art reflects the magnificence of seventeenth century society. The outstanding personality of that society was Louis XIV, a man with a majestic bearing, surrounded by great nobles, living in the most magnificent castle of the age. The spirit of magnificence was caught by Louis XIV's courtiers as well as by kings and princes of other countries. The palace of Versailles was the scene of many magnificent and artificial ceremonies. The formal dress of king and courtiers during a reception was truly a magnificent sight. Louis XIV was pleased with this spirit of greatness among his courtiers because his own greatness was enhanced by that displayed by his inferiors. Away from the Court the spirit of magnificence was just as noticeable. The desire to impress people, to preserve dignity, to appear great was noticeable in the household of almost every noble. Boulenger reports that a simple Councillor, in 1675, kept a secretary, a master of the House, two men-servants, a porter, a house-steward, a pantler, a cook, two pages, six lackeys, two coachmen, two postillions, two footmen, four grooms, and in addition, to serve his wife, two maids, a lady's maid, and four woman servants. He adds that great nobles had over a hundred servants.²³

23 Boulenger, Jacques, The Seventeenth Century, (London, 1930), 349.

The effect on society of the artificial forms, magnificent and fantastic conceptions, worldly and material spirit of Baroque art was not beneficial. The art did not express ideas which would have been elevating or uplifting to man, but rather reflected the desire on the part of the people for wealth and power. The worldliness of Baroque art influenced and reflected the artificial and worldly life that nobles and courtiers led at Court. Briggs says that the whole existence of great men and women of countries where Baroque art flourished, was devoted to a life of pleasure and display. He adds that the typical seventeenth century garden shows in miniature the spirit of the age, with its hydraulic toys and its shameless stucco divinities, its majestic terraces, and its ingenious vistas.²⁴

24 Briggs, 218.

CHAPTER II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RATIONALISTIC
PHILOSOPHY

Famous exponents of rationalism --
Scientific nature of rationalism --
Influence of toleration -- Air of
contempt for authority -- Its
questioning of revelation as a
truth -- Growth into atheism --
Precursor of the eighteenth century
revolutionary philosophy.

CHAPTER II

Philosophy is even more important than art to the student of history because it expresses the thought of the age. The social spirit of an era can be grasped better when we know what the men of that period thought of God, life, and self. Philosophy sets up a standard by which we can judge men's attitudes towards these problems. It tells us how the leading thinkers of the age reasoned about philosophic facts, and the conclusions they drew therefrom. Consequently, we can turn to the philosophic considerations of the age of Louis XIV with the knowledge that we will find therein a more complete picture of the social spirit of that age.

The characteristics of the rationalistic philosophy of the age of Louis XIV show how that philosophy set the stage for the highly critical, revolutionary philosophy of the eighteenth century, which in turn became the father of the French Revolution. The most prominent characteristic of rationalism is its scientific nature combined with an emphasis upon reason.¹ A second characteristic is its growth among Protestants

1 McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, Protestant Thought Before Kant, (New York, 1911), 192.

who were seeking toleration,² the principle that put all religions upon an equal footing. A third characteristic is its air of contempt for authority.³ A fourth characteristic is its questioning of revelation as a truth, exemplified by the doctrines of Deism.⁴ A fifth characteristic of rationalism is its growth into atheism, in which the supernaturalism of man is denied.⁵ A study of these characteristics points out that rationalism paved the way for the revolutionary philosophy of the eighteenth century which was to spare nothing from its criticism.

Rationalism became widespread throughout the seventeenth century because of the famous people who advocated and propogandized its doctrines. The real forerunners of rationalism were the Socini, uncle and nephew, Italian humanists of the preceding century. Lelio Socini (1525-1562) and his nephew, Fausto (1539-1604), became religious leaders in Poland. They tried

2 Randall, John Herman, The Making of the Modern Mind, (Cambridge, 1926), 283.

3 Ogg, David, Europe in the Seventeenth Century, (London, 1925), 538.

4 Randall, 291.

5 Randall, 301.

to eliminate from their religion all mysteries and everything that was irrational. They held that human nature did not need super-natural aid in order to lead a moral life, and they rejected the idea of human nature being evil. They also held that Christ's atonement for the sins of man was unnecessary.⁶

Another forerunner of rationalism was Arminius (1560-1609), whose doctrines captivated the minds of the English and Dutch. Arminius attacked the doctrine of total depravity and the Calvinist doctrine of predestination as being irrational. He did not reject the whole system of depravity, however, because he accepted the dogma of the Fall and consequent need for divine grace.⁷

In England Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) was the advocate of rationalism. In 1624 he published his book, De Veritate, in which he set up common consent as the principle test of truth, and he used this criterion in the religious field. He distinguished a natural religion shared by wise men of all ages and races, and he claimed that different faiths had obscured many vital truths and had brought in religious dissension, where there should have been universal

6 Randall, 284.

7 McGiffert, 189.

harmony.⁸

Another advocate of rationalism in England was John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury. He thought of religion as a system of rational propositions, given from without, and to be tested as other propositions are tested, by rational evidence. He allowed revelation, not as a foundation, but as a supplement, to make natural religion clearer.⁹ The English rationalists, Tillotson, Locke, and Clarke, believed religion was a science, like physics, a system of propositions to be tested by evidence of human reason. They had three propositions for their natural religion: (1) there is an omnipotent God, (2) He demands virtuous living on the part of man in obedience to His will, (3) there is future life in which He will reward the good and punish the evil.¹⁰

In France the outstanding advocate of rationalism was Rene Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes took nothing for granted in his philosophy, except the principle upon which his whole system is based, cogito ergo sum. This latter he considered as a self-evident first principle. From this beginning, he proceeds to prove,

8 McGiffert, 190.

9 McGiffert, 195.

10 Randall, 287.

step by step, the existence of the world and of a divine power.¹¹ He attempted to reject all knowledge coming from the senses, because the senses sometimes deceive people. He also rejected all thoughts he had previously had, basing his philosophy entirely upon reason.¹² Cartesianism became very popular in France. The people there became captivated by the scientific method, and more and more tended towards a religion of reason.¹³

Another exponent of rationalism in France was the pious Malebranche, who tried to prove by reason the truth of religious tradition, and in doing so, minimized elements that could not be proved. So popular had the religion of reason become that great ladies from the Court of Louis XIV came to the humble cell of the philosopher and preacher to hear him expound the principles of natural religion. ¹⁴

One of the important characteristics of rationalism is its scientific nature with an emphasis upon reason. Science in the seventeenth century was attempting to separate itself from theology and the Bible. Previously a scientific discovery or theory

11 Sedgwick, Henry Dwight, France, (Boston, 1929), 183.
12 Boulenger, 127.
13 Randall, 286.
14 McGiffert, 195.

was considered false if it seemed to contradict the Bible. Now in the seventeenth century a number of scientists were advancing theories that seemed to be at variance with the Bible and with scholastic philosophy. Scientists were explaining the phenomena of nature according to natural causes. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) probably had more influence upon rationalism than any other scientist. In 1687 he set forth the "Law of Gravitation", with which he was able to explain the phenomena of nature by comparing them with one another, giving natural laws for their actions, and avoiding recourse to the Bible to prove his theories. He propogated his findings, and they had a great effect upon rationalistic philosophy because they placed emphasis upon natural causes.¹⁵ Science and philosophy became strongly related in the seventeenth century. Most of the leading philosophers of the century were imbued with the scientific spirit, and practically all of them were mathematicians. Their efforts were directed to the application of the laws of mathematics to philosophy.¹⁶ McGiffert says that the discoveries and theories of Bruno, Copernicus, Kepler, Gassendi, Bacon,

15 Ward, A.W., Prothero, G.W., and Leathes, Stanley, The Cambridge Modern History, (Cambridge, 1908), vol. VI, 776.

16 Ogg, 535.

Newton, and others combined to promote the credit of human reason and to undermine the authority of traditional systems and opinions.¹⁷ Scientific discoveries and theories gave credence to the claim that God had created a world machine, and that it acted thereafter by universal laws.¹⁸ Such a world machine was the basis of rationalism.

A second characteristic of rationalism was its spread among the Protestants who sought toleration. In the seventeenth century the people had become tired of the intolerant criticism directed against all religious sects, and they began to look forward to a universal religion which would be accepted by all people. Rationalism made its home among Protestants rather than among Catholics, because the former were divided among themselves and had to seek toleration. Protestants could not live side by side, maintaining a status of intolerance toward each other.¹⁹ Protestant thinkers began looking for a natural religion which would be acceptable to all men, one that would end religious bickerings. The search to find such a religion and to approve of toleration led them directly into rationalism.²⁰

17 McGiffert, 192.

18 Randall, 291.

19 McGiffert, 187.

20 Randall, 283.

A third characteristic of rationalism is its air of contempt for authority. Scholasticism had been considered for centuries as the authoritative philosophic system, but now in the seventeenth century the rationalistic philosophers had no faith in it. Philosophic instruction in the colleges at the beginning of the seventeenth century was still based upon scholasticism, but the principles of scholasticism were not being accepted as formerly. Since the time of the Renaissance there had been a questioning of the authority of Aristotle, and now his philosophy was gradually being rejected in favor of other systems borrowed from antiquity.²¹ Philosophers were groping through Platonism, Neo-Platonism, Epicurianism, and Stocism in search for a philosophic system which would conform to the rationalistic attitude of the day. They were unable to find what they sought in any of these systems, and had to be content to wait for a rationalistic system to come from their own leaders, such as Descartes and Cherbury. The principle feature of Descartes' philosophy is its complete break with the past. Descartes has been called the father of modern philosophy because he broke away completely from Scholasticism and from the influence

21 Cambridge Modern History, IV, 776.

of the Humanist thinkers of the Renaissance.²² He developed a complete philosophy of life based upon consciousness. In his system he shows clearly his contempt for authority.

A fourth characteristic of rationalism is its questioning of revelation as a truth. This is seen especially among the radical rationalists, called Deists in England. Rationalists had maintained a united front until the leaders split into two camps: (1) the orthodox or supernatural rationalists, who accepted the religion of nature or reason, but also held that revelation was important. They claimed that some things could not be rationally established, but accepted them on revelation. (2) The Radicals, or Deists, who rejected revelation entirely, and insisted on natural and rational religion.²³ The Deists claimed that God had created a world machine which acts always by universal laws. They denied that prophesy or miracles furnish adequate ground for believing in Christian revelation. Moreover, they looked upon miracles, prophesy, and all particular religious rites and beliefs as superstitious.²⁴ This was extreme rationalism. Sir Isaac Newton had a great influence

22 Ogg, 525.

23 Randall, 285.

24 Randall, 291.

upon the Deists, because his law of gravity convinced them that the universe was ruled by fixed laws, and that the supernatural had no place in it.²⁵

A fifth characteristic of rationalism is its growth into atheism, in which the existence of God, of immortality, and of the supernaturalism of man is denied. The tendency for rationalism to turn into atheism took place through the medium of skepticism. The break between the rationalists and the Deists resulted in a skeptical attitude on the part of many people towards all religion. The rationalists, in attempting to answer the attacks of the Deists upon prophesy and revelation, began to question whether man should believe in natural religion itself. This was skepticism, and was popular in France and England. Skeptics began to question the existence of God, future life, and moral order in the world.²⁶ Many intellectuals joined the skeptics and questioned revealed and supernatural religion. The influence of science tended to strengthen their argument that the universe was but a machine, working according to natural laws. Against the Deists came the attacks of the skeptics, materialists, and traditionalists. These

25 Phillippson, Martin, Age of Louis XIV, (New York, 1905), 204.

26 Randall, 297.

philosophers tried to undermine the roots of natural religion, and to force the Deists to accept revelation and natural religion on faith rather than on pure reason. They succeeded in uprooting Deism, but did not succeed in their aim. Deism gave way to skepticism and atheism. William Law of England wrote The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion Fairly Stated, in which he denied that reason could establish any religious truths whatever. This left a choice between abandoning religion or else reason. The rationalists chose to abandon religion.²⁷ In the eighteenth century Hume, Holback, and Kant criticized natural religion thoroughly with the result that their followers became skeptics. Hume doubted whether God existed at all; Holback denied God, freedom, and immortality. This was real atheism.²⁸ Just as rationalism had become the fashion under the leadership of Descartes, now atheism became the fashion. In France, Louis XIV's sister-in-law, Madame de Palatine, could say in a letter,

"Religion is so dead in this country that all the young men desire to be considered atheists, but what is stranger is that the same young people who are atheists at Paris play pious at Court. It is maintained also that all the cases of suicide and lately we have had a great many, are the result of atheism."²⁹

27 Randall, 298

28 Randall, 301.

29 Stevenson, Gertrude Scott, The Letters of Madame, (London, 1924), I, 184.

What conclusions are to be drawn from a study of the characteristics of rationalism? We know that the attempt of the rationalists to build a scientific religion upon reason was a failure. We know too that rationalism was destructive because it led people directly into atheism. But the characteristics of rationalism show more than these facts. Rationalism had an air of contempt for authority. This is shown in its attitude toward Aristotle and the Bible. However, the seventeenth century philosophers did not attempt to criticize all authority. That was left to the eighteenth century philosophers for whom the rationalists had paved the way. The critical philosophy of the eighteenth century which criticized Church and state, particularly the government known as the Ancient Regime, became the father of the French Revolution. It is important to realize then the destructive part which rationalism played upon its own and succeeding generations.

CHAPTER III. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES OF THE
THIRD ESTATE

Opportunities offered by Secondary schools -- Opportunities offered by Primary Schools -- Opportunities provided through the influence of Colbert -- Opportunities of acquiring an informal education.

CHAPTER III

The educational opportunities provided for the lower classes of people in a country are important to the student of social history. The type of education given in the schools shows us what the educational leaders of the time sought from their systems. But besides the formal educational opportunities in the schools are the important informal opportunities open to the people at large. In this connection it would be well to study the opportunities in France during the Age of Louis XIV because that country was the outstanding country of Europe during this era. A study of these opportunities will bring us into contact with the social conditions of the period, and will result in a more complete picture of the social spirit of the age.

The educational opportunities of the Third Estate during the Age of Louis XIV became greater than they had been in previous eras. The secondary schools offered great opportunities in education to the children of the bourgeoisie. Primary schools offered the rudiments of education to the children of peasants and bourgeoisie. Informal educational opportunities received a great impetus from Colbert (1619-1683), the minister of finances. Colbert developed a financial policy benefic-

ial to the lower classes,¹ and he gave impetus to the French Academy which was to standardize the French language, and thereby help more people to know their language well.² Colbert also provided opportunities for the French peasants to secure better agricultural knowledge.³ Other informal educational opportunities came to the members of the lower classes in France through the medium of songs,⁴ newspapers, and pamphlets,⁵ and letter-writing.⁶ All of these educational opportunities, formal and informal, combined to increase the number of men who could call themselves learned, and thereby gave rise to the intellectual revolution of the eighteenth century.

The secondary schools in France offered great educational opportunities to the children of the bourgeoisie. Each secondary school was known as a Lycee, a name which had for its origin the Lyceum of Athens,

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- 1 MacKinnon, James, *The Growth and Decline of the French Monarchy*, (London, 1912), 358.
 - 2 Lavissee, Ernest, *Histoire de France*, (Saint-Germain, 1907), Vol. VII, Part II, 88.
 - 3 Lavissee, Vol. VII, Part II, 213.
 - 4 Stevenson, I, 194.
 - 5 D'Avenel, Georges, vicomte, *Richelieu et la monarchie absolue*, (Paris, 1884), 156.
 - 6 Perkins, James Breck, *France under Mazarin with a Review of the Administration of Richelieu*. (New York and London, 1902), II, 392.

Aristotle's school founded in 335 B.C.⁷ Several of the secondary schools in France became famous during this century. Among these were the Little Schools of Port Royal which were few in number and had a short career (1637-1661). The Port Royal Schools were called "Little" in order to avoid friction with the universities, and because they limited their teaching to a few picked students. The system of teaching was almost tutorial, so much time was given to each individual pupil. Education began with a study of the vernacular, instead of with Latin, and only after the child had mastered the former was he brought into contact with Latin. The teachers introduced the study of Latin through translations at first, and then through Latin grammar, finally through translations of classic writings. The Port Royal teachers invented a phonic method for teaching reading and spelling. They gave the pupils a moral training through the use of literature fitted for that purpose. The whole curriculum included Latin, History, Geography, Mathematics, Literature, and Natural Science. The Port Royalists have become famous for their emphasis upon the study of the French language and literature for its own sake. It was partly due to this emphasis that

7 Cubberley, Ellwood P., The History of Education, (Boston, 1920), 44.

the study of the vernacular held such a high place in France.⁸

The Oratory of Jesus, founded in 1611, was another influential secondary school system. Originally it was intended as a seminary to educate priests, but the system branched out and began to care for lay students too. Many colleges were founded, of which the one at Juilly, was the model.⁹ The curriculum included French literature, History, Latin, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Philosophy. Emphasis was placed upon the vernacular and scientific studies. The outstanding students educated at the Oratory were Malebranche, Mascaron, Massillon, and Richard Simon.

The most influential secondary school system during the seventeenth century was that of the Jesuits. The purpose of education in the Jesuit schools was to develop the fundamental qualities of a student, and to lay a foundation in his mind and character for future work in scientific, professional, or special fields. The Jesuits tried to make good citizens out of their students by developing their religious and moral life.¹⁰

8 Tilly, A., Modern France, (Cambridge, 1922), 366.

9 Tilly, 365.

10 Hughes, Reverend Thomas, S.J., Loyola and the Educational System of the Jesuits, (New York, 1892), 248.

The curriculum in the Jesuit schools was essentially the same as that in other secondary schools, but the mode of procedure was new. The Jesuits developed a new method of teaching, known as the principle of emulation. They insisted upon more written work than other secondary schools, and emphasized translation and composition. Many students were attracted to the Jesuit schools by the mildness of the discipline, the pains taken to make the life attractive, and the care given to the health and physical well-being of the students. Some of the distinguished students of the Jesuit Schools in the seventeenth century were Conde, Luxembourg, Descartes, Corneille, Moliere, and Bossuet.¹¹ Concerning the influence of the Jesuit schools, Cubberley, who is not partial to Catholic education, says:

"With such carefully selected and well-educated teachers, themselves models of upright life in an age when Priests and monks had been careless, it is not surprising that they wielded an influence wholly out of proportion to their numbers, and supplied Europe with its best secondary schools during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the loyal Catholic countries they were virtually the first secondary schools outside of the monasteries and churches, and the real introduction of Humanism into Spain, Portugal, and parts of France came with the establishment of the Jesuit Humanistic colleges. For their schools they wrote new books, and for a time they put new life into the humanistic type of education."¹²

11 Tilly, 364.

12 Cubberley, 343.

The secondary schools had a great influence upon the Bourgeoisie class. These schools contacted more people than did the higher or lower ones, gave them a good education, and provided them with some culture through the study of the classics.¹³ The roots of the eighteenth century awakening, of the rise to power and influence of the Bourgeoisie, lie in the educational opportunities provided in these secondary schools.

The elementary schools offered educational opportunities to the children of the poor. During the seventeenth century the Parish Church was the center of the religious, social, and educational life of the peasants. The fact that the Church recognized its responsibility to educate the people may be seen from the words of the Bishop of Angers:

"Among all the cares which the responsibilities of the episcopal office lays upon us, there is none which we feel more deeply than the instruction of the children. We therefore charge all our clergy to give a portion of their time to this work, wherever a school has not been established. In parishes where there are several priests the junior shall be held responsible for this duty, or some other examined and approved by the Bishop." ¹⁴

The Church provided Charity schools for the children of

13 Kane, W., S.J., An Essay Toward A History of Education, (Chicago, 1935), 275.

14 Wilson, Mrs. R.F., The Christian Brothers, (London, 1883), 48.

the poor people. These were numerous in the north and east sections of France, but existed here and there throughout the country. The curriculum of the charity schools included reading, writing, arithmetic, religious and moral instruction, and sometimes a handicraft.¹⁵ The School of Saint Etienne du Mont is a good example of a charity school. It had eighty-four children who were to remain only so long as their parents were unable to pay a fee. The course of studies lasted for a period of two years, and included religious instruction, Latin, French, writing, and arithmetic. Children were allowed to enter the school at the age of eight or over.¹⁶

Elementary educational opportunities were greatly increased through the work of De La Salle, founder of the order of Christian Brothers. De La Salle established the first normal school in 1684 to train teachers, and he remedied the methods in vogue by introducing the simultaneous method. The purpose of the organization of the Christian Brothers may be seen in their rule:

"The Institute of the Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes is a society, the profession of whose members is, to hold schools gratuitously. The object of this Institute is to give a

15 Tilly, 368.

16 Adamson, John William, Pioneers of Modern Education 1600-1700, (Cambridge, 1905), 202.

Christian education to children, and it is for this purpose that schools are held, in order that the masters, who have charge of the children from morning to night, may bring them up to lead good lives, by instructing them in the mysteries of our Holy Religion, and filling their minds with Christian maxims, while they give them such an education as is fitting for them"¹⁷

The principle of the simultaneous method is well expressed in the Manuel of the Christian Brothers:

"While one reads, all the other children in the class follow the words in their books. The master must watch very carefully to see that all read to themselves, what one is reading aloud, and from time to time he must put some of them on, to read a few words, that he may take them by surprise, and make sure that they are really following the reading."¹⁸

The classes in the Christian Brothers' schools lasted six and one-half hours a day, of which time one hour was devoted to religion. However, the Brothers looked upon religious training as the foundation of all education. We may conclude that the instruction of the poor or common children, even before the time of De La Salle, and certainly after his time, was not as much neglected as is sometimes pointed out. Provision was made for education, and parents were exhorted to send their children to school. Throughout France, in almost every parish, there was some sort of school in

17 Wilson, 122.

18 Wilson, 138.

which children could learn religion and the three "R's", and these schools were not a burden upon the state.¹⁹

There were many informal educational opportunities open to the people of France during the age of Louis XIV. Colbert (1619-1683) provided many opportunities through his policies. As minister of finances under Louis XIV he developed a financial policy, a false one sometimes called Colbertism, by which he believed that a country's wealth depended upon the amount of money coming into the country.²⁰ In carrying out this policy Colbert provided informal educational opportunities for the French people. He made efforts to create in France manufactures of articles of luxury which would bring gold into the kingdom, to attract the world's commerce to the Atlantic and Mediterranean ports, to create trade companies, to develop colonies in Canada, the Antilles, and Madagascar.²¹ All of these efforts on the part of the minister provided chances of advancement for the French people. Colbert gave special attention to the development of industry. He founded the royal manufacture of tapestry of Beauvais in 1664, and that of the Gobelins in 1667. Moreover, he tried

19 Wilson, 53.

20 Tilly, 65.

21 Tilly, 65.

to organize the workers of all trades into one strong organization, and he wanted them to agree upon the length, size, and quality of goods, and to maintain that agreement in their work. Finally, he wanted a tariff to hinder the products of other countries from competing with those of France.²² These efforts of Colbert, intended to increase the greatness of France and of her king, actually resulted in providing opportunities for the lower classes.

By his aid to the French Academy Colbert provided another form of educational opportunity for the French people. The original members of the Academy had intended that the body should be a secret one, but Cardinal Richelieu decided to give it his protection and use it as a literary decoration of the reign.²³ Richelieu wanted to make France dominant in Europe, and he wished that the French language would take a similar position. At that time (first half of the seventeenth century) the Spanish language was enjoying the ascendancy once held by Latin, but not to the same extent. The Cardinal thought that with proper direction

22 Clement, Pierre, Histoire de la Vie et de l'Administration de Colbert, (Paris, 1846), 215.

23 Saint-Beuve, G.A., Portraits of the Seventeenth Century, (New York, 1904), II, 6.

the French Academy might be able to gain a victory for the language over the Spanish, and in this way he hoped to humble the Hapsburgs even further than the French armies were doing. In 1671 the French Academy found itself without a protector and a meeting place. It might have died out at this point had it not been for Colbert, who gave it lodging and prestige by assigning a portion of the Louvre to it. He named the king as its protector, and he himself took the title of vice-protector. Added to this, he allowed it a small sum of money to pay for its writings and supplies. He urged the members of the Academy to work on the Dictionary, because he wanted fixed rules for the language, and hoped that more people by knowing their language well, would work toward the glory of the king.²⁴ Under his protection and influence the members of the Academy worked harder and better than ever before. They published the first edition of the Dictionary in 1694. The Academy had its influence on the lower classes of France through the prestige it gave to the study of French literature, as well as by the incentive it gave to the people to test their ability as writers, holding before them as an ideal, membership in the Academy. The

24 Lavisse, VII, Part II, 88

high social position of the members of the Academy pointed the way for the members of the lower classes toward their own social advancement.

Colbert also provided opportunities for the peasants of France by his aid to Agriculture. He instituted a public service of inquiry and statistics so that the peasants could learn how to cultivate their lands better. He brought in rams from England and Spain, distributed seeds and cattle free of charge, reduced the taille, and attempted to aid agricultural progress as much as possible.²⁵

There were other informal education opportunities open to the public besides those provided by Colbert. The French people received a chance to acquire information and knowledge through songs, papers, and letters.

Songs provided an interesting and entertaining opportunity for the French people to acquire knowledge. The troubadours and trouvères of medieval France had their counterpart in the seventeenth century. Madame Palatine tells of the historical truths that could be found in the songs of the day:

"In France every epoch of history can be studied in this way, because everyone is celebrated in song. The history of everyone at Court can be learnt from ballads better than from books, because in the

25 Lavissee, VII, Part II, 213.

latter, people are always flattered, while the songs tell of events as they really happened". 26

Newspapers and pamphlets also offered informal educational opportunities to the French people of the seventeenth century. The Gazette de France, founded in 1631 by Theophraste Renaudot, became the first real French newspaper. However, Richelieu purchased it, along with the Mercure francais, and thereafter used these papers as official journals. Other papers founded during the century were the Mercure Galant, La Muse Historique, and Le Journal des Savants. Besides these papers there were a number of mysterious pamphlets and placards, printed in cellars in Paris or brought into the country from foreign parts, such as La Milliade, L'Impiete sanglante, and le Tresor des epitaphes, which were read by thousands of people.²⁷

Letter writing also offered information and educational opportunities to the people of seventeenth century France. This means of communication seems to have been looked upon as an important duty at the time. Madame Palatine had special hours set aside in the morning for the task of writing letters. The fact that the lower classes also indulged in letter writing may

26 Perkins, II, 392.

27 D'Avenel, 156.

be seen from the fact that a number of men acted as letter writers for those who could neither read nor write. Such men charged from five to twenty sous for a letter, depending upon the elevation of style required.²⁸ However, letters were often read at the post office, as reported by Madame Palatine:

"I dare not tell you on paper what is the cause of my trouble, because I know very well that my letters are opened and read. The post office does you and me the honour of sealing our letters up again very carefully, but those of the worthy Dauphiness are often sent on in a dreadful state, and²⁹ are actually torn open by the authorities."

Letter writing was common between the nobles at Court and the nobles who lived in the country, as well as between the poorer classes of people. This was a valuable means for the transmission of information and knowledge.

Another means of information and informal education was the conversation between travellers and their townsmen. When the nobles returned from the court to their country chateaus they often conversed with the peasants, telling them of the events that took place at Versailles. Moreover, there was more travelling done in this century than previously. Many of the young peasants went to the cities to find employment,

28 Perkins, II, 392.

29 Stevenson, I, 46.

and when they came back to visit their parents they brought with them some of the manners and details of living which distinguish city life from rural life. Many of the young people went to the French colonies in America. Some of them returned and brought with them an increased knowledge of the world about them.

The educational opportunities, formal and informal, of the seventeenth century served to increase the number of educated people in France. The real significance of the increased educational opportunities in this century lies in the fact that the French people as a whole became interested in intellectual matters, and in the following century became leaders of the intellectual revolution. The increase in educational opportunities also led to the demand upon the part of the people for some share in their government, a demand that went unheeded until the French Revolution.

CHAPTER IV. THE EDUCATION AND MANNERS OF THE NOBILITY

Education of young noblemen -- Education of Louis XIV, of Louis XV -- Education of girls at Saint-Cyr -- Manners of the nobility -- Manner of spending time at Court -- Louis XIV the center of Court life -- Influence of Madame de Maintenon upon the Court.

CHAPTER IV

The social spirit of a nation usually emanates from one group of people and is imitated by the rest of the people. In the France of Louis XIV, the group of people who formed the model in social life for the rest of the nation was the nobility. Hence, if we concentrate our attention upon the French nobility, and more particularly upon the education and manners of the Versailles courtiers, we can acquire a more complete grasp of the social spirit of that age.

A study of the education and manners of the French nobility during the Age of Louis XIV presents us with a conflict between the artificial, worldly culture of the period and the religious idealism of a Catholic nation. The education of nobles was primarily religious in nature, and tutorial in method. This is seen in the education of the most important nobles of the period, Louis XIV, and his successor, Louis XV. The school which Madame de Maintenon founded for poor noble girls, the College of Saint-Cyr, was devoted to a formal religious training for the future ladies of the Court. But the manners of the French nobles and courtiers were artificial and worldly, against which Madame de Maintenon struggled with some success.

The education given to Louis XIV furnishes an example of the type of education given to the sons of great nobles. Cardinal Mazarin received complete charge of the education of the young king from the hands of the Queen mother, Anne of Austria. Mazarin appointed the Marquis de Villeroy as the king's governor, and the Marquis in turn appointed as his assistant the Abbe de Beaumont, a doctor of theology. Concerning the qualifications of Villeroy, Madame de Motteville says:

"He was the wisest man at court; he had commanded the armies; but his great qualification was knowing better than anyone else the interior affairs of the kingdom, and having both capacity and ideas for matters of state." 1

The royal student studied Latin and translated Caesar's Commentaries. He also learned to draw, dance, and ride horseback. Villeroy tried to instill in him a thirst for arts and science by bringing him into contact with the outstanding men of the period in these branches. He urged Louis to take Henry IV as his model. Mazarin himself instructed the king in the duties and obligations of a sovereign. Madame de Motteville's description of the king when he was sixteen

1 Madame de Motteville, Memoirs of Anne of Austria and Her Times, (Boston, 1901), I, 145.

shows how successful Mazarin had been in training Louis to act the part of a king:

"His fine figure and good countenance made everyone admire him, and he bore in his eyes and in the whole air of his person the character of majesty which was, in virtue of his crown, essentially in him." 2

The Queen mother reserved for herself the task of giving Louis a moral education. She taught him how to pray, and strove to instill in him principles of piety, honor, and virtue. The formal education of Louis XIV ended when Mazarin, on his death bed, called the king to his side and advised him to rule by himself, and not to raise another prime minister to the power which he had acquired. Mazarin confessed that he knew,

"from the things he could have done injurious to his service, how dangerous it was for a king to put a man in that position. He also left other counsels and valuable precepts which the king himself wrote down, in order to remember them for his guidance." 3

The education given to Louis XV was better than that given to his predecessor. Here again the method was tutorial. Madame de Ventadour cared for the little king until he became seven years old. She has been given credit for taking him as a pale and delicate child and developing him into a strong and healthy boy. At

2 Motteville, III, 96.

3 Motteville, III, 238.

the age of seven he was handed over to men guardians at which time, in accordance with a French custom, he was stripped and examined by doctors, princes, princesses and ladies, all of whom pronounced him to be of the male sex, of good health, sound of body, and of limb.⁴ Then under the tutorship of the Duke of Villeroy and Bishop Fleury, the young king studied Latin, writing and history every day, and three times a week geography, astronomy, drawing, mathematics, and natural science. Fleury also had him instructed in typography, and had him print posters and pamphlets of precepts which he wanted impressed upon his mind. The royal student also worked out a book of seventy-two pages of geography which showed the courses of the main rivers and waterways of Europe. As the king became older, many of the scholastic lessons were dropped, and replaced with instruction in military science and government. The formal education of Louis XV was better than that given to his predecessor, but the difference in the characters of the two men more than made up for the difference in their education. As a youth Louis XV was timid and bashful. His education had not instilled in him an intellectual taste or love

4 Pierre Gaxotte, Louis XV and his Times, (Philadelphia, 1934), 56.

of work. Mackinnon says that the only strong interest of his mind lay in his prayer-book, and in religious ceremonies, that he had some interest in natural history, astronomy, and botany, but that beyond this his mind was a blank.⁵

The school which Madame de Maintenon founded for poor noble girls, the College of Saint-Cyr, brings out more pointedly the emphasis placed upon religious instruction. The qualifications for entrance into Saint-Cyr were that the girls must belong to the noble class and must be poor. Anquetil says:

"The idea of this institution occurred to Madame de Maintenon, by reflecting on the dangers and distresses of her early years, and she was happy in seeing it afford protection to a multitude of helpless girls who might otherwise have been exposed to misfortunes, like those she herself had experienced." ⁶

Girls entered Saint-Cyr between the ages of seven and twelve, and remained until they reached the age of twenty. After their entrance, they could leave the school only with special and rare permission.⁷ The girls were divided according to their age into four

5 Mackinnon, 598.

6 Anquetil, M., Memoirs of the Court of France during the Reign of Louis XIV and the Regency of the Duke of Orleans, (London, 1741), I, 369.

7 Lavallee, Theophile, Madame de Maintenon et la Maison Royale de Saint-Cyr, (Paris, 1862), 164.

classes. Girls from seven to ten years old were put in the red class, where they learned reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, catechism, and Bible history. At the age of eleven the girls entered the green class where they continued to learn the same subjects along with music, history, geography, and mythology. At fourteen the girls entered the yellow class where they studied the French language, music, religion, dancing, and posture. At seventeen they entered the blue class where instruction was aimed at a fine moral character.⁸

In a letter to the Sisters of Saint-Louis, Madame de Maintenon tells of the type of education she wanted at Saint-Cyr:

"God having willed to use me to assist in this establishment which the king undertakes for the education of the poor young ladies in his kingdom, I think I ought to communicate to the persons destined to bring them up what my experience has taught me about the means of giving them a good education...

"When we seek to form their reason, waken their hearts, elevate their minds, destroy their evil inclinations, in a word, make them know and love virtue, we must always be at work, for at all moments opportunities present themselves. We are just as important to pupils in their amusements as in their lessons,

⁸ Lavalley, 165.

and we cannot leave them for a moment except to their injury ...

"It is right to let them sometimes follow their own will in order to show their inclinations, to teach them the difference between what is good, what is bad, and what is indifferent...

"You must be implacable on vices, and punish them either by shame or by chastisements, which must be very rigorous, but as rare as possible...

"They should be taught all the delicacies of honour, integrity, discretion, generosity, and humanity; and virtue should be described to them as being both beautiful and agreeable, as it is. A few little stories suited to this purpose will be proper and useful, amusing yet all the while instructing them; but they must be convinced that if virtue does not have religion for its basis it is not solid, and God will not sustain it..." 9

Thus the college of Saint-Cyr stands out as an advanced educational center for noble girls who received a thorough instruction based upon religion.

We see now, however, that the manners of the nobles and courtiers at Versailles, both men and women, were influenced more by the artificial and worldly culture of the period than by the religious principles acquired in their education.

Louis XIV continued Richelieu's policy of inviting the nobles to spend their time at Court and to

9 Wormeley, Katharine Prescott, The Correspondence of Madame, Princess Palatine; of Marie-Adelaide de Savoie, and of Madame de Maintenon, (Boston, 1899), 239-242.

form there a fine society. The king liked to be surrounded by people, liked to be admired and praised by them. His position, character, regal bearing, and majestic appearance all tended to make him the true center of court life. The Grand Monarque desired to have lesser nobles around his person as well as great ones. Etiquette demanded that this court society attend his getting up in the morning, which was a complete ceremony in itself, and his going to bed at night. Courtiers were also required to attend him at his meals, on his walks through his apartments and gardens, at his hunting, and at all court functions. It is reported that the king, on such occasions, would look around to his right and left, notice everyone, and observe the absence of any courtier who should have been there:

"It was a demerit in the monarch's eye for the more eminent not to spend their time chiefly at Court, for others to come but seldom, and those who did not appear at all were certain of disgrace. When application was made to him in behalf of anyone of the latter, he used to reply dryly, 'I do not see him; he is a man whom I never see'. After this reply, there was no hope." 10

The character and manners of the king were very suit-

10 Lathy, Thomas P., Memoirs of the Court of Louis XIV;
(London, 1819), III, 420.

able for his position among the courtiers. Anquetil says:

"He was good, which is much better than great...Lewis possessed a large fund of affability, mildness, politeness, and sensibility. None ever bestowed favours with a better grace than he...His manner of receiving people, saluting, and speaking to them, added greatly to the value of his favours. His smile, his very look, rendered those on whom they were graciously directed, happy. His tone of voice, even in putting indifferent questions, was peculiarly flattering to those with whom he conversed. Such too, were the marks of distinction which he distributed with great impartiality, according to age, merit, or rank. It would appear that all the rules of propriety were so impressed on his memory, as to occur naturally whenever there was occasion." 11

From the descriptions of court life that come down to us, we learn that the Court was not a pleasant place in which to live. Madame de Motteville says of the Court:

"Of what nature is that climate called the Court; its corruption, and how fortunate should they esteem themselves who are not fated to live there. The air is never sweet or serene for anyone. Even those who, apparently in perfect prosperity, are adored as gods, are the ones most threatened by tempests. The thunder growls incessantly for great and small; and those whom their compatriots regard with envy know no calm. It is a windy gloomy region, filled with perpetual storms. Men live there little, and during the time that fortune keeps them there,

they are always ill of that contagious malady, ambition, which kills their peace, gnaws their heart, sends fumes to their head, and often deprives them of reason. This disease gives them a continual disgust for better things. They are ignorant of the value of equity, justice, kindness. The sweetness of life, of innocent pleasures, of all that the sages of antiquity counted as good, seem to them ridiculous; they are incapable of knowing virtue and following its precepts, unless chance may happen to remove them from this region. Then, if they can by absence be cured of their malady, they become wise, they become enlightened; and no man can be so good a Christian or so truly a philosopher as a disillusioned courtier." 12

Madame de Maintenon speaks in a like manner about the Court, even though her position there was an exalted one:

"Often on returning to Versailles, I think: 'This is the world, and apparently the world for which Jesus Christ would not pray on the eve of His death. I know there are good souls at Court, and that God has saints in all conditions; but it is certain that what is called the world is centered here; it is here that all passions are in motion, self-interest, ambition, envy, pleasure; this is the world so often cursed by God.' I own to you that these reflections give me a sense of sadness and horror for that place, where nevertheless, I have to live." 13

The manners of the courtiers truly reflected the worldliness of the era. Madame Palatine says that the

12 Motteville, I, 70.

13 Wormeley, Correspondence, 300.

people at the Court of Louis XIV were very puffed up and arrogant, and that their pride was beyond description.¹⁴ Excessive drinking of alcoholic liquor was one of the faults of the exalted ladies and men.¹⁵ During the minority of Louis XIV, life at court was a succession of gay parties and dances. The Duke of Roquelaure speaks of them in his memoirs:

"... everything had moved without obstruction, and Paris, Versailles, Ruel, and Fontainebleau never ceased to re-echo to the sounds of gay fetes and the exquisite balls." ¹⁶

Gambling was another worldly attraction of the courtiers. Madame Palatine says that this was the main occupation of many people at Court.¹⁷ Still another worldly occupation was duelling. The king had passed laws in France forbidding duels, but the pride of the nobles led them into such contests. Saint-Simon tells us that seconds in a duel were accustomed to fight one another, and that many duels took place without apparent cause.¹⁸ The Duke of Roquelaure relates that he started a duel with a man

14 Stevenson, I, 32.

15 Stevenson, I, 111.

16 Roquelaure, Gaston Jean Baptiste, duke de, The Secret Memoirs of the Duke de Roquelaure, (Private-16 printed, 1896), I, 291.

17 Stevenson, I, 234.

18 Saint-Simon, Duke of, Memoirs of Louis XIV and the Regency, (London, 1901), I, 49.

because the other had enjoyed one more dance with a young noble lady, the Princess de Guemenee, than he had.¹⁹ Such a spirit reflects the pride and worldliness of the courtiers.

The artificiality of court manners is seen in the rules of precedence and etiquette of the period. Precedence often led to disputes. The Parisian streets were so narrow that it was impossible for two large carriages to pass one another. When two such carriages met on the street it was customary for the carriage of the lesser dignitary to back up to the next crossroad. However, the task of judging which of the two nobles was the less exalted often led to heated arguments which lasted for hours. Saint-Simon tells of the occasion on which the carriages of the Duchess of Hanover and Madame de Bouillon met on the street (1692), and the servants of the former forced the other carriage to draw aside. Madame de Bouillon planned her revenge. She knew that the Duchess of Hanover would be at the theatre on a certain day, so with a host of servants she went there, and urged the servants to fight those of the Duchess. The latter's servants were beaten, her harness on the carriage was cut, and the coach was

19 Roquelaure, I, 89.

damaged.²⁰

The rules of etiquette were artificial to an extreme. An example of such rules is the grave distinction which the nobles acknowledged between footstools, arm-chairs, and chairs with backs on them, because each type of chair signified rank. Chairs were scarce at Versailles, and the lesser nobles were never allowed to use them unless they were alone. Madame Palatine tried to find out whether the rank of her friend, the Duchess of Hanover, was high enough to warrant the use of an elbow-chair on her visit to Court, but the ruling dignitaries at Court would not hear of it.²¹

The english had a strong influence upon manners at the Court of Louis XIV. Whenever English nobles, ambassadors, or members of the royal family came to the French Court their visit instigated the courtiers and the Bourbon family to put on a great display of splendor. Receptions, fetes, and ceremonies given in honor of the visitors were unparalleled at any other European Court. When the Prince of Wales, later Charles II, came to Fontainebleau to see the king and queen he was entertained with splendid balls, comedies, and excursions.²² The influence of Charles II of

20 Saint-Simon, I, 28.

22 Motteville, I, 211.

21 Stevenson, I, 32.

England upon the manners of Louis XIV himself is told
by Madame de Motteville:

Louis XIV "was agreeable personally, civil and easy of access to everyone; but with a lofty and serious air which impressed the public with respect and awe, and prevented those he considered the most, from emancipating themselves even in private intercourse, although he was familiar and gay with the ladies. One of the things which may have contributed to make the king take this course was the reputation the King of England had acquired after he returned to the throne. The great praise the king heard given to him for the manner in which he governed his kingdom -- much less submissive to its king than ours -- stirred him to emulation and increased, if it were possible, the passion he had to make himself greater and more glorious than all the princes who had hitherto worn crowns." 23.

Princess Henrietta of England contributed to the manners at the Court of Louis XIV by introducing charming, polite, lively conversation. When she married the brother of Louis XIV, Philip, she could not speak or write French in courtly fashion, but she mastered the language through reading. Her influence was most noticeable at the Court. Bourgeois says that she inspired an intellectual emulation and introduced an elegant politeness and other graces at the Court of Louis XIV, hardly dreamed of by the rest of Europe.²⁴
It was this politeness and elegance of conversation

23 Motteville, III, 243.

24 Emile Bourgeois, France Under Louis XIV: Arts and Ideas, (Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1897), 45.

which led to the highly artificial language of courtiers.

We have seen that the manners at the Court of Louis XIV were noted for their characteristics of artificiality and worldliness. The influence of Madame de Maintenon upon courtly manners was in the opposite direction.

The rise in fortune of Madame de Maintenon was extraordinary. She was born on November 27, 1635 in the prison of Niort, where her father had been detained for his debts. Evidently, she had a miserable childhood, although she travelled much with her father, coming to America and then returning to France after his death. Raised as a Calvinist, she became a convert to Catholicism. She married the poet, Scarron, and after his death, spent some time in the literary salons of Paris. She secured a position as tutor to Madame de Montespan's children at the Court of Louis XIV, and after the death of the queen, became the wife of the monarch.

The influence of Madame de Maintenon upon courtly manners was very great. She was deeply interested in religion, and hated the worldly manners and airs of the courtiers. It was through her influence that the Court became less magnificent. She did not favor the dances, balls, fetes, and ceremonies which had been

almost continuous at the Court before her advent. Consequently, these were curtailed. Anquetil says that so great was the change she produced in manners and customs that the people began to think themselves under a new reign.²⁵ Courtiers followed her example and showed a great zeal for religion. Louis XIV himself became a different man under her influence. Madame Palatine says that the king had not been a pious man when he was under the influence of Madame de Montespan, but that he had become very penitent under the influence of Madame de Maintenon.²⁶ Before the death of the queen, Maria Theresa, Madame de Maintenon exercised her influence to bring about good relations between the king and queen. Anquetil quotes Queen Maria Theresa as saying,

"Why should I be prejudiced against her? I should rather thank God for raising her up, to restore me that heart, of which Madame de Montespan had deprived me. And indeed, I never lived so happily with the king, as since he listened to her advices." ²⁷

The power of Madame de Maintenon at Court was tremendous. She was the real power behind the throne. Every afternoon the king and ministers came to her room to consult her about government matters.²⁸ Madame de

25 Anquetil, I, 330.

26 Stevenson, I, 136.

27 Anquetil, I, 302.

28 Wormeley, Correspondence, 304.

Maintenon tells us in humble terms about her power in the Court,

"All this makes me think sometimes when I reflect upon it that my position is so singular, it must be God who placed me in it. I behold myself in the midst of them all, this person, this old person of mine, the object of all their attention. It is to me they must address themselves, to me through whom all passes... I do not allow myself to be blinded by the grandeur and favour that surround me; I regard myself as an instrument which God is using to do good." 29

Thus we see in Madame de Maintenon the influence against the worldly, artificial manners and customs of the period. The principles and ideals of the education given to the nobles combined with the influence of Madame de Maintenon to wage a war against the current philosophy of living, but it was futile. The education of the nobles failed to bring desired results.

29 Wormeley, 304.

CHAPTER V. THE POSITION OF THE CLERGY

Strength of the clergy in France --
Numerical strength -- Life of the
high clergy -- Life of the low
clergy -- How the clergy used their
wealth -- Attitude of the people
toward the clergy.

CHAPTER V

A study of the social spirit of the age of Louis XIV would not be complete without a treatment of the Catholic clergy during that era. The strength and solidarity of the members of the clergy, their social position in France, their work as caretakers of education, their social functions as guardians of the sick, poor and aged, and their functions as spiritual benefactors make the study of the clergy a vital part of any treatise on the social spirit of the age. The clergy of France occupied a high position because of their wealth, priveleges, and functions, but the very highness and strength of that position served as the central attack against them.

Historical events in France had contributed to the high position the clergy held there in the seventeenth century. When Clovis the leader of the Franks became converted to Christianity in 496 along with three thousand of his followers he earned for France the title, "Eldest Daughter of the Church". The French people had been proud of this title for centuries. In the sixteenth century the Catholic Church in France had increased their prestige by its successful stand against the Protestant Revolution. The Catholic Clergy had

increased their prestige during the seventeenth century by their successful attempt to spread the faith to the French possessions in the New World. This was the work of the French Jesuits, but it received the enthusiastic support of the French people at large. The Catholic Church increased its strength in France, at least outwardly, when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. This left Catholicism as the only legal religion in France, and took away from the Protestants not only the right to worship but also the right to live.¹

Socially, the clergy enjoyed a high position. They were represented in the Estates General as a distinct body, and took first place at these meetings. The clergy were ranked higher than the nobility and third estate, and were second only to the members of the royal family. Thus outwardly at least, France took on the appearance of a united Catholic people. The clergy in France with its priveleges and prestige was truly a strong power.²

The numerical strength of the clergy was not great. They comprised about 1.8 percent of the population of France. There were approximately 71,000 secular priests

1 Pressense', Edmond De'hault de, The Church and the French Revolution, (London, 1869), 9.

2 Aulard, A., Christianity and the French Revolution translated by Lady Frazer, (London, 1927), 31.

and 60,000 regulars.³ The number of nuns in 1700 was about 100,000.⁴ In considering the clergy of France one must distinguish between the high clergy and the low clergy. The former were those who held clerical offices of importance, such as abbots, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals. The low clergy were the ordinary priests and monks who performed most of the spiritual services of the Church. In general the high clergy were wealthy and the low clergy were poor.

The high clergy did not have the admiration or respect of the French people. Most of the members of the high clergy belonged to families of nobility. This showed that the nobles were monopolizing these positions in the Church which had honors and riches attached to them. Many of the high clergy lived away from their stations, and entrusted their duties to assistants, keeping the revenues for themselves. Bollenger reports that many abbots who had charge of monasteries, collected the revenues, but lived apart from the monasteries, and that bishops were even less in residence than abbots.⁵ Some of the high clergy

3 See, Henri, Economic and Social Conditions in France during the Eighteenth Century, (New York, 1927), 60.

4 Lacroix, Paul, The XVIIIth Century, 140.

5 Bollenger, 100.

lived worldly lives, feasting and dining magnificently, while others spent their time at the court, and lived like courtiers. The bishops who kept state and delighted in displaying their wealth were evidently few, and the good bishops were in the majority; but the worldly minority made such a stir that they brought discredit to the entire group. As a whole, the high clergy could not claim the respect and admiration of their followers by pointing to their own lives as exemplary Christian living.

The lower clergy present a different picture. In the seventeenth century an ecclesiastic had no right to an income because of his office; if he were to make a living it was necessary for him to have a benefice. But there were fewer benefices than there were ecclesiastics, so that many of the latter were obliged to earn their living by manual labor. Bollenger says that many of the lower clergy were obliged to work for wealthy nobles who employed them to run errands and other less exalted tasks.⁶ There is evidence to prove that the parochial clergy were zealous in their duties, that they taught the Catechism to every child, attended the sick and dying, established missions, and often preached from early morning till late at night. The

⁶ Bollenger, 101.

lower clergy were credited with many charitable works, and with the care of the sick and poor. In general they led exemplary lives, and used their meager incomes to far better advantage than did the higher clergy.

The clergy of France had two sources of income. One was from land which had been accumulating during the centuries. Some of the land had come as donations from wealthy individuals and some had come as donations by French kings. Donations of this nature had usually been given so that Masses would be offered for the souls of the donators. The clergy had control over the land, but were not allowed to sell it or donate it to friends or relatives. Most sources agree that in the seventeenth century the Church owned about one-fifth of the land in France. Since land constituted the principal source of income in France, it was considered especially valuable. Most of this Church land was rented to peasants, and this rent formed a huge income for the clergy.

A second form of income for the clergy was from the tithe, a legal ecclesiastical tax imposed on all the French people. The idea of the tithe had been borrowed from the Bible, which shows that the Hebrews were required to give one-tenth of their products to the Church. In France, the Carolingians made this pay-

ment to the Church a civil obligation. The income from the tithe was estimated at the time of the Revolution to equal 134,000,000 francs annually. It was a very unpopular tax and did not serve to put the local priest or collector on a more friendly basis with the peasant. Most of the revenue from the tithe went to the Bishops and high clergy. The total revenue of the Church including income from the tithe, land, and donations was estimated by Necker in the eighteenth century at 110,000,000 livres.⁷ The Abbe Expilly calculated the wealth of the church at 170,000,000 livres annually.⁸ Thus the wealth of the Church contributed to the popular estimate of the Church's power and prestige.

The clergy put their wealth to many uses. One way in which they used their money was to contribute to the government. They paid the Decime, an ecclesiastical duty levied on the clergy just as the taille was levied on the people. The total amount of this tax was fixed in 1580, but diminished in the seventeenth century. The Decimes were renewed by contracts every ten years. Assemblies of the clergy met to pay this tax in the years in which the date ended with the

7 Necker, A Treatise on the Administration of the Finances of France, (London, 1785), II, 307.

8 Ducros, 226.

figure five. The clergy also contributed gratuitous gifts to the royal treasury. Before the time of Louis XIV these contributions varied in frequency and quantity, but during his reign they were made every five years, and increased very much. They varied from 8,400,000 livres to 16,000,000 livres every five years.⁹ Necker says that the clergy also paid a tax peculiar to each diocese, whose total amount could be estimated at about 1,400,000 livres.¹⁰ Thus the clergy contributed to the government even though they were technically exempt from taxation.

The clergy also used their wealth to provide an educational system for the French people. All education was in their hands. They had parish schools, higher schools, colleges, and universities. They taught everyone in the lower schools whether they had money or not. Lacroix says that education was forthcoming to anyone who wanted it, that it was very costly in cases where the family was willing to pay a large sum, but free for those who were poor, from primary instruction up to the classical studies.¹¹ Education was not a profitable enterprise for the clergy, but it was carried on efficiently and successfully.

9 Cans, Albert, L'Organisation financiere du clerge de France a l'epoque de Louis XIV, (Paris, 1909), 145.

10 Necker, II, 299.

11 Lacroix, 243.

Part of the wealth of the clergy was used to care for sick people in France. The clergy had seven hundred hospitals under its control, and about one hundred small establishments used for the care of the sick in small villages.¹² Most of the hospitals were erected from the income of parishes and from money which the clergy had borrowed. Many hospitals were for poor people who could not afford to buy medicine or get doctors when they became sick. In such places no one could receive care without a letter from his parish priest which affirmed that he was poor and worthy of treatment. The clergy also had control of other establishments which helped to use up any excess money. Their asylums for the poor housed 110,000 people, and their homes for the aged and infirm cared for 40,000 people. They also had orphanages in which 40,000 babies were raised and educated.¹³

The clergy also spent a great deal of money for charitable purposes. Lacroix says that food was distributed daily at monastery gates, and that when the poor became ill they were sure of finding refuge and care in the almshouses and hospitals cared for by monks and nuns.¹⁴ Necker also praises the charity of the clergy:

12 Necker, II, 179.
13 Necker, II, 179-188.
14 Lacroix, 269.

"Bishops, great ecclesiastical innumbents and monasteries employ a great part of their income in giving work to the poor or in assisting them in times of distress. Charitable institutions could be found in almost every parish, controlled by the Church, where funds were set aside for the relief of the poor. The money spent for such purposes has never been calculated, but it amounted to a considerable sum." 15

The clergy had other expenses which helped to drain their huge income. They paid 100,00 livres annually for pensions to new converts and gratuities to theological writers. Another expense was the 150,000 livres paid annually for assistance to old and infirm priests, and for the upkeep of seminaries.¹⁶ When all these expenses and contributions are added together it can be seen that the clergy made good use of their wealth.

The attitude of the people of France toward the clergy was varied. The clergy were looked upon as the best landlords in the country. They were never absentee landlords. The abbot of a monastery sometimes spent his time at Court, but the monks and priors remained behind. They not only worked on their own fields, but they tried to help the tenants in every possible way, showing them the best methods for tilling the soil, and

15 Necker, III, 173.

16 Necker, II, 302.

producing a fine harvest. The Church lands were the best cultivated in France, and so the monks could speak with authority upon agricultural subjects.

The principal criticism directed against the Church was that it was too strong. The Church had the prestige of wealth, power, education, and ecclesiastical office. Its bishops formed the elite of the country.¹⁷ Because of its wealth and strength, the Church in France was inclined to sit back, and direct its attacks against those who criticized its priveleges. Many of the upper clergy failed to defend their religious doctrines against the attacks of atheists, but took great care to defend their position and prestige. Probably the greatest criticism against the Church was its lack of vitality. The educated classes often ridiculed the faith, but were not answered by the clergy. Tocqueville says of the Church during the following century:

"It was in the character of a political institution far more than in that of a religious doctrine that Christianity had inspired such fierce hatreds; it was not so much because the priests assumed authority over the concerns of the next world, as because they were landowners, landlords, tithe-owners, and administrators in this world; not because the Church was unable to find a place in the new society which was about to be constituted, but because she

17 Feuilleurat, Albert, French Life and Ideals, (New Haven, 1925), viii.

filled the strongest and most priveleged place in the old state of society which was doomed to destruction." 18

Pascal and other Jansenists directed an attack against the French Clergy and the Jesuits which was applauded by the people. The wranglings of the clergy over the Bull, "Unigenitus" did not aid in making that body more popular. The high clergy with their lavish display of wealth helped to increase the general notion that the Church of France was wealthy and powerful. In general, the very things which made the Church strong in France, its wealth, priveleges, and power were condemned. The people of France had no criticism against the doctrines of the Church.

18 Tocqueville, Alexis, The State of Society in France before the Revolution, (London, 1888), 6.

CHAPTER VI. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VERSAILLES

Description of Versailles --
Influence upon the nobility --
Influence upon the common
people -- Influence upon foreign
courts -- Inspiration to literature
-- Inspiration to music, art, and
science -- Versailles, the complete
expression of a national spirit.

CHAPTER VI

Louis XIV's castle at Versailles was the center of government action, the home of French society, and the principal source of French glory. It was here that the king planned his war maneuvers, here that he entertained the most brilliant people of the age, here that he made such a great impression upon the people of Europe. Such was the activity at Versailles that one who reads the memoirs and history of France during this period might almost think that Versailles was France. Certainly, the social spirit of the age cannot be grasped without knowing the significance of Versailles.

Versailles was a symbol of inspiration and influence during the age of Louis XIV. It had a profound influence upon the nobility, and a contrasting influence upon the common people. It had a great influence upon the other courts of Europe. It was an inspiration to literature in France and in foreign countries. It was an inspiration to music, art, and science. It was in fact the complete expression of a national spirit.

Versailles was the most magnificent castle that had ever been built. The incident that probably moved Louis XIV to build the castle of Versailles was the trip he and his courtiers took to the castle of his minister of finances, Fouquet. Madame de La Fayette tells of

the king's visit to Vaux:

"For a long time the king had said that he wished to go to Vaux, the superb house of this superintendant, although prudence ought to have prevented him from letting the king see a thing which showed so plainly the bad use of the finances...

"The whole Court went to Vaux and M. Fouquet joined to the magnificence of his house everything that could be imagined for the beauty of the reception. When the king arrived, he was truly astonished... The feast was the most complete one that had ever taken place." 1

Louis XIV found that his own castles could not compare with that of his minister, a fact that did not conform to his ambition and love of glory. Shortly after the entertainment at Vaux, he had Fouquet arrested, and then he began to build the castle of Versailles as a great symbol of his own power and glory. The building of Versailles was not planned at the outset as it became in its final form. Louis XIV began the work by having his architects add buildings to a small chateau which Louis XIII had on the spot. Anquetil says:

"The buildings insensibly increased and multiplied. When one was finished, that suggested the idea of raising another for the sake of convenience or regularity. The gardens were in the same manner extended. The courtiers, observing the king's attachment to the place, wished to be invited hither. But there were not lodgings to accompany them... These therefore were to be built.

1 Petitot, A. et Monmerque, Collection Des Memoires Relatifs a l'Histoire de France, Tome LXIV, Madame de La Fayette, "Histoire de Madame Henriette D'Angleterre", (Paris, 1828), 403.

"... When the Court was once established there, every day presented some new object for improvement; separate buildings were to be joined, hills to be levelled, hollows to be filled up, a miry sandy soil to be rendered dry and firm, canals to be dug, and waters to be brought to fill them. It was intended to bring the River Eure that way from eight leagues distant. Aqueducts were begun for that purpose in a superb style." 2

The whole palace inspired awe, due to the majestic, imposing architecture. The great monumental staircases of Versailles show the effect of Baroque upon French architecture. The gardens, laid out by Le Notre, were the wonders of Europe. Trees, water fountains, temples, sculptured works, labyrinths, and menageries all served to make the gardens of Versailles one of the most beautiful spots of the world.

Life at Versailles during the period of prosperity was gay and festive. Madame Palatine describes a typical day at Versailles:

"From morning until three o'clock in the afternoon we went hunting. On our return from the chase we changed our dresses and went upstairs to the gaming, where we stayed until seven o'clock in the evening. Then we went to the play which did not end until half-past ten o'clock. After the play came supper, followed by a ball, which usually lasted until three o'clock in the morning, and only then could we go to bed." 3

2 Anquetil, I, 207.

3 Stevenson, I, 28.

The dances, balls, and masquerades at Versailles were more magnificent than agreeable. The fact that only the greatest of the courtiers were allowed to sit down at any time at such festivities shows the ridiculous height to which etiquette could carry people. The most popular dance, one which the king enjoyed, was the slow, stately Pavane, which was later replaced by the lively, running dance, la courante.⁴ The continual round of ceremonies and amusements at Versailles did not assure the courtiers of a happy, contented life. Madame Palatine speaks unpleasantly of the life:

"I assure you that all is not gold that glitters, and in spite of the vaunted French liberty, all their amusements are nambypamby and formal to a degree. Moreover, ever since I have been here I have seen so much depravity, that if I were to find myself in a place where hypocrisy did not reign supreme, and false speaking was not encouraged and approved as it is at this Court, I should think that I had indeed found Paradise."⁵

The magnificence of Versailles and of Court life in general tended to make the people look upon the king as somewhat of a demigod. In many memoirs we hear him referred to as the modern Jupiter. The tendency to pay too much reverence to the king was heightened by his personal qualities, the successes of his enterprises,

4 Funck-Brentano, M. Frantz, The Old Regime in France, (London, 1929), 176.

5 Stevenson, I, 46.

the flourishing state of his reign in finances, his armies, generals, and conquests. The general spirit of submission on the part of the nation along with the flattery of the courtiers helped to make Louis XIV stand out above all other monarchs. The king became accustomed to the flatteries and praises heaped upon him, and began to think that they were not without foundation.⁶ The effects of these tendencies upon the common people may be seen in their reaction to the unveiling of the statue of the king in the Place of the Victories. Anquetil says that the statue was consecrated amid the sound of warlike instruments, and the discharge of artillery, by genuflections, and every ceremony employed by the heathen in deifications. On the base of the statue, engraved in golden letters, were the words, Viro Immortali.⁷

The castle of Versailles had an enormous effect upon the nobles who came to spend their time there. They became enchanted by the life they led, so that when they left the Court and went to their own homes they sought to imitate the luxuries of Versailles. There were many chateaus built during the century by great nobles and

6 Spanheim, Ezechiel, Relation de la Cour de France en 1690, (Paris, 1900), 93.

7 Anquetil, I, 333.

and rich bourgeoisie, and in these buildings there was an effort to reproduce the grandeur and magnificence of Versailles. Nobles tried to have a large clientele of admirers around them, such as the king had at his court. The man and lady of the house had their own followings, their own servants. The noble tried to gather around him important literary men in the same manner that Louis XIV was doing at Versailles. In the fine dinners, decorations, ceremonies, and the like, the noble was simply an imitator of his master. The number of pages a noble had in his household was not so much a question of vanity as that of necessity. He needed them in order to show influence and station in life. In general, the more noise and confusion that emanated from the chateau of a noble, the more highly respected was that noble. This attempt on the part of the nobility to imitate Versailles had a bad effect. It led to exaggerated living, a spirit of wealth that was not always in keeping with the actual wealth of the individual. The noble tried to make an ostentatious display of wealth in the number of carriages that he was able to possess as well as in the greatness of his stables. He spent much of his time gambling, and the stakes sometimes involved houses and land. He sought to make his parties as magnificent as possible. On the inside of his castle the

noble had many heroic, allegorical, and unhuman figures which characterized the art of the period.

Versailles did not have a good effect upon the common people of France. The cost of the castles of Versailles, Marly, and the Trianon exceeded one hundred millions of livres. The cost of maintaining the courtiers at Versailles, of the magnificent ceremonies, of the pensions to nobles and men of letters, all combined to place a heavy burden upon the common people. The cost of decorating Versailles by bringing in waters from the River Eure resulted in a great loss of life. Many of the workers died, and the project had to be abandoned.⁸ But more important than the cost of maintaining Court and its society was the fact that the common people grew further and further away from the king and his courtiers. When Louis XIV moved with his courtiers to Versailles, he broke the link between himself and his people. Thereafter, he lived in comparative isolation; he no longer knew the people, and they did not know him. The sympathy between the two was lost. The spirit of aloofness that took hold of the king and courtiers at Versailles was a dangerous thing; we find here one of the germs of the French Revolution.⁹

8 Ogg, 308.

9 Mackinnon, 469.

Versailles also had a strong influence upon the other Courts of Europe. Louis XIV's castle was the marvel of the age, and it instigated throughout Europe a general desire to imitate it. Practically every Court in Europe, except that of Poland and perhaps that of Spain, showed in some manner the influence of Versailles. Even the many small principalities in the German states sought to imitate Versailles, and in doing so, wrought hardship upon the peasants. Bourgeois says of Versailles:

"The Court became the headquarters of pleasure and the model of the other European Courts. The king piqued himself upon giving fetes which should cast those of Vaux into the shade." 10

The reign of Queen Anne in England shows in some measure the influence of Versailles. The great amount of building in France, particularly at the Court, resulted in a similar trend in England. The famed English architect, Inigo Jones, built Greenwich Hospital at the time that the elder Mansart was raising the dome of the Val de Grace. When Perrault built the colonade to the Louvre, Wren was restoring Hampton Court. Le Notre, the famous French landscaper, visited England to lay out the gardens for Saint James.¹¹ There was even some talk in

10 Bourgeois, 37.

11 Hill, Cecilia, Versailles, its Life and History, (Boston, 1925), 7.

England about building a new castle, but nothing came of it. Queen Anne's Court resembled that of the French king in that around her were collected the courtiers, wits, and notables of England, such men as Swift, Congreve, Addison, Prior, Newton, Kneller, Saint John, Walpole, Parnell, Garth, and Arbuthnot, men who earned for England, as French writers had earned for France, the title, "Augustan". 12

French literature during the Age of Louis XIV reached an unprecedented height, and had an enormous influence upon the literature of other European countries. The inspiration given to French writers by Louis XIV from his castle at Versailles was largely responsible for French predominance in this field.

The encouragement of Louis XIV helped to make seventeenth century French literature the greatest in French history. The king was deeply interested in literature, a fact that encouraged men of letters to do their best work for him. He pensioned many distinguished writers, even foreign ones; some of the writers of the period became his personal friends, and a few of them had the great privilege of dining with him. His attachment to the belles lettres gave literary men a high standing, and

12 Ryan, P.F. William, Queen Anne and her Court, (New York, 1909), II, 464.

after his time it was unnecessary for a writer in France to apologize for his profession. The reign gave an impulse to culture in general. Clubs and salons inspired a taste for cultivated conversation, and they gave rise to open and intelligent discussion of such topics as philosophy, science, literature, and even politics.¹³

The great writers of the century, inspired and encouraged by their king, repaid that help by bringing glory and acknowledgement to France. The names of the great dramatists, Corneille, Racine, and Moliere; the philosophers and moralists, Descartes, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyere, and Malebranche; the poets, Boileau and La Fontaine; the orators, Bossuet, Fenelon, Flechier, Bourdaloue, Mascaron, and Massillon; and the women writers, Madame de la Fayette, Madame de Sevigne, and Madame de Maintenon, are immortal names in the history of literature.

Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) stands out as one of the greatest writers of the century. He was not inspired by the Grand Monarch as were many of the other writers, for his great work was done long before Louis XIV came into power. But he did point the way toward French predominance in literature. The fact that the people of his own time appreciated him may be seen from the comment of the Duke de Roquelaure,

¹³ Mackinnon, 506.

"Corneille was then at his zenith, and all the talk was of a tragedy entitled, Rodogune, Queen of Parthia... Corneille had already produced a large number of works, all of which had won the respect of men of perception. His dramatic equipment was very considerable,... and of a sort to strike envy into his competitors. He had already had from him, Melite, or Les Fausses Lettres, Clyandre, La Veuve, La Galerie du Palais, La Suivante, La Place-Royale, Medee, L'illusion Comique, Le Cid, Horace, Cinna, Le menteur... It may be judged from those I have already cited, how difficult we should be to please, for the author had spoiled us. Rodogune was a triumph, and we left the theatre astonished, and ... intoxicated by the play." 14

Jean Racine (1639-1699) owes much of his greatness as a tragic dramatist to the inspiration of Louis XIV. Racine gained recognition as a writer in 1660 through his Nympe de la Seine. Colbert sent the young writer a hundred pistoles in the name of the king, and settled a pension on him as a man of letters. Racine became a favorite of Louis XIV, and was often called to the king's bedside in order to read to the monarch. Lathy says that the king always loved Racine, sent often to him in his last illness, and settled a huge pension on his family when he found that the dramatist had died poor.¹⁵ Racine's great dramas were his Andromaque, Iphigenie, Phedre, Britannicus, Berenice, Bajazet,

14 Roquelaure, I, 293.

15 Lathy, II, 431

Mithridate, Esther, and Athalie. Racine had a great advantage over his predecessor, Corneille, by appearing at the most brilliant period of the century, by receiving the inspiration of a great king and a refined audience, and by receiving the encouragement of people like Madame de Maintenon and Colbert.

Moliere (1622-1673) was a comic dramatist who owed much to the inspiration of Louis XIV. The latter gave comic drama a high standing in France by his attention to Moliere, by his patronage of Moliere's troupe, and by the act of inviting the great comedian to dine with him. Moliere was raised in a literary environment; he accompanied his grandfather to the Hotel de Bourgogne, and acquired a taste for dramatic literature. He studied at the Jesuit College of Clermont, and later took up law, but he gave up the legal profession for that of the stage. With the help of La Bejart, an actress from Champagne, he formed a company of actors, and in 1633 produced his first play, L'Etourdi, in which he appeared in the role of author and actor. Louis XIV's brother, Philip, adopted his troupe, and 1653 Moliere and his followers played before Louis XIV and his Court. In 1663 Moliere was granted a pension of 1000 livres, and in 1665 his company was altogether in the king's service.¹⁶

¹⁶ Lathy, II, 492.

Concerning the reputation of Moliere, Lathy says,

"The French have very justly placed Moliere at the head of all their comic authors. There is indeed no author in all the fruitful and distinguished age of Louis XIV, who had attained a higher reputation, or who has so nearly reached the summit of perfection in his own art, according to the judgement of all the French critics, and we may add, of all the world." 17

Moliere's comedies had a far-reaching social effect upon the French upper classes. He ridiculed the foolish customs of all classes of men, exposed the hypocrites of the ecclesiastical order and the bigots among the laity. He satired vice and folly, selected a great variety of ridiculous characters peculiar to his time, and sought to show how foolish they were. As a general rule, his ridicules were just and appropriate. In the Bourgeois Gentilhomme he ridiculed the contempt of people for the profession of their fathers, and their ambition to be considered a member of a higher order than that to which they really belonged. In Tartuffe and Festin de Pierre he made his audience laugh at the hypocrisy of the age; in Le Madade imaginaire and Le Medecin malgre lui, he cast ridicule on the quack doctors that flourished in France; and in Les Precieuses Ridicules

and Les Femmes Savantes, he satirized the affectation of learning in women. Lathy says that after fifteen days representation of his Femmes Savantes, there was an entire stop of female pedantry in Paris.¹⁸ At the time of Moliere's death, a vacant seat was intended for him in the French Academy. A century later, the members of the Academy placed his bust in their hall, under which was the inscription: "Nothing is wanting to his glory; he was wanting to ours".¹⁹

The influence of the French writers upon writers in foreign countries was remarkable. Practically all of the writers in Europe looked toward the French masters for inspiration. In Germany, Martin Opitz absorbed the main features of French literature and earned for himself the name, "German Malherbe". Fleming also shows in his work that he imitated the French, and Andreas Gryphius was a thorough student of Corneille. The German Gottsched was an imitator of the French school as was Gellert, who owed so much to the inspiration of La Fontaine. In the field of philosophy there is no doubt that Leibnitz was influenced by Descartes. In Italy the Seicentisti displayed strong French influence. Guidi was an imitator of Malherbe, and Testi was influenced

18 Lathy, II, 504.

19 Lathy, II, 499.

by the grace of Maynard. Chiabrera was a student of the French poets, and Maffei studied the French tragic dramas of the seventeenth century for his famous Italian tragedy, Merope. In Spain, Ignacio de Luzan y Guerra became the disciple of Descartes and of Port Royal; he even wrote a book upon a French subject, The Logic of Port Royal. Moratin developed a French style for his comedies and tragedies, and Jove Llanos showed the influence of French in his tragedy, Pelage. The "Augustans" of eighteenth century England also show the influence of the French writers of Louis XIV's age. Addison incorporated some of the famous French wit into his works along with many of the French methods; he owes much to the influence of Boileau. Pope's letters have a style and manner akin to those of Balzac and Voiture, and his moral poems show the influence of Boileau.²⁰ As a result of this great French influence upon writers of other countries, Faguet points out that France became the intellectual sovereign of Europe, and that all eyes were turned toward her, and all ears listened to her.²¹ France owes much in the literary field to the greatness of her king, Louis XIV, whose love of glory was a great incentive to the men of letters.

20 Cambridge Modern History, V, 68-70

21 Cambridge Modern History, V, 70.

Louis XIV also gave music a higher standing in France by his patronage and love of the art. Bourgeois says that before the time of the grand monarch, music in France was in its infancy; that the violin, guitar, and theorbs were the common instruments, and that others were either not known or not played.²² The famous musicians upon whom the king heaped favors were Lulli, Lalande, Colasse, Campra, Destouches, and Rameau, of which Lulli was by far the outstanding. Lulli gave opera a higher place than it had hitherto held, and he put order, logic, and eloquence into the expression of sentiment and passion. His orchestra was the best in Europe, and it attracted music lovers from the whole of Europe. Lavissee says that Lulli had an influence on religious music by writing some psalms with eight or ten voices, something like religious operas, which comprised songs which were sung by two people or whole groups of people. He adds that the King loved this grandios and pathetic style which Lulli gave to religious music.²³ Lalande wrote some beautiful symphonies to accompany the suppers of the king, and these were played and sung in the king's presence by eighty persons. Louis XIV was himself a musician. He played the lute, harpsichord, and the guitar, and he

22 Bourgeois, 311.

23 Lavissee, Histoire de France, VII, Part II, 137.

even composed some music. He seems to have liked musicians even better than architects and painters, because he ennobled Lulli and assisted at the marriage of Lalande. He examined carefully the works which these two men were producing. The prologues of operas and allegorical plays in which the events of his life were put in symbolical forms were especially interesting to Louis XIV because these celebrated his glory.²⁴ The king spent most of the day near musicians and their music. In the mornings at chapel, at his meals, at the amusements of the evenings, even when out hunting, Louis XIV had his musicians with him. His love for music spread among the courtiers, among the Parisians at large, and even among the lower classes. It can be said that he served to make the study of music fashionable, and gave it a much higher place than it had before his time.

Versailles and its king, Louis XIV, also served as an inspiration to seventeenth century artists. The king wanted France to be supreme in the realm of art, and the building of the castle of Versailles made his wish possible. Versailles needed pictures, stucco works, painted ceilings, and statues, all of which acted as an incentive to French

24 Lavissee, VII, Part II, 137.

artists. The king encouraged painters and sculptors, and was always ready to consider their work, to appreciate their labors, and to pay magnificently.²⁵ Colbert gave new life to the Academy of Painting, and prevailed on Louis XIV to establish an academy at Rome. Louis did as his minister urged, purchased a palace there, and installed a director. The French Academy in Rome was held up as an incentive to art students in Paris, and those who gained prizes at the French capitol were sent to Rome and maintained at the king's expense. Such students studied particularly the antique and Renaissance masters, Raphael and Michelangelo.²⁶ Louis XIV loved buildings, gardens, and all the arts which helped to glorify him. He studied designs minutely, examined works of art during their construction, gave orders and complimented or reprimanded the artists on their work. Lavissee says that Louis probably did not get the pleasure from art that an art lover would get, because he looked upon art as a manifestation of his own power and glory. He adds that Colbert did not have a taste for art either, but that he realized the value of art, and that he wanted to astonish people and bring out the glory of the reign.²⁷

25 C. Hill, 19.

26 Bourgeois, 313.

27 Lavissee, VII, Part II, 127.

Louis XIV also gave inspiration to science. The Academy of Sciences was founded in 1666, mainly through the efforts of Colbert. The king attracted the outstanding scientists of Europe to France by giving them handsome pensions and making them members of the Academy. Roemer came from Denmark, and became famous for his work in determining the velocity of the sun's rays; Huygens came from Holland and defined the principles of the regularity of the movement of pendulum clocks. Huygens also discovered the ring of Saturn and one of its satellites. Cassini came from Italy and discovered other stars. As a result of the work of the Academy of Sciences, astronomy stopped predicting future events, medicine became independent of the phases of the moon, and chemistry was freed from the philosopher's stone.

The real significance of Versailles, then, is that it was the complete expression of a national spirit. It was a world in itself, out of touch with the rest of the nation. Its magnificence, splendor, and grandeur represented the reign of le roi soleil more than any other institution in France. The ceremonies, fetes, pageants, crowds of courtiers, and etiquette of Versailles marked a great contrast between the Court and the rest of France. Here it was that Louis XIV entertained and inspired his generals, architects, painters, writers, in fact, all those great

characters who served to make France the outstanding country in Europe, men who earned for their age the title, "Augustan".

CONCLUSION

The age of Louis XIV may be divided into three periods, preparation, culmination, and decline. The first of these periods is marked by the work of Sully, Richelieu, and Mazarin, who prepared the way for the brilliant reign of Louis XIV. During this preparatory period the nobility made their last desperate bid for power. This attempt reached its height during the years of the Fronde, and resulted in the complete subjection of the nobles to the will of the king.

The second or culminating period begins when the young Louis XIV decides to rule by himself without a prime minister. Louis XIV proceeded to make himself supreme in France and a participator in all the activities of the nation. Colbert placed the finances on a sound footing, and helped to make French industry and commerce flourish. Louvois created armies that made France the dominant military power in Europe. The first twenty-five years of Louis' reign were successful in almost every field, particularly, in literature, art, politics, administration, and society. France during this time was the most populous, wealthy, and powerful nation in Europe. The brilliance of French society provided the world with a model of good manners and fashions. French literature had reached its golden age through the literary achieve-

ments of Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Boileau, Bossuet, Moliere, Racine, La Fontaine, and Madame de Sevigne. It was truly a brilliant period in French history.

The third period is one of decline. The immense cost of foreign wars left the finances of France in a critical condition. The death of Colbert in 1683 left commerce and industry without a champion. Louvois lost popularity by demanding uniformity and unqualified obedience in the army. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 was followed by the persecution of the Huguenots. Formerly, France had been praised for being the first country to allow religious freedom; after 1685 France was severely condemned for reviving religious persecution. Many of the French Huguenots fled to rival European countries, thus crippling French industry and enriching foreign industry. The foreign policy of Louis XIV drove European nations into open hostility. His wars proved disastrous to the French nation, and resulted in humiliating treaties. During the period of decline the king failed to restrict expenditures at the court. After the queen's death he married Madame de Maintenon, who strove to make court life more decent, but in doing so made it less gay. Religious observances at court increased under the influence of the king's second wife, but also became stiff and burdensome

to the courtiers. Most of the great writers who had brought literary brilliance to the early reign of the king were now dead. After 1685 only a few great works appeared, and these were largely critical.

The age of Louis XIV taken as a whole was a brilliant age, but one that could not last. The manners and customs of the period combined with the art of the century indicate the artificiality of the entire age. Because the religious unity of medieval Europe had been broken, philosophic thought drifted through every color of thought and fancy. Isms is its best characterization. Religion itself was lame except where still directed toward the principles of its founders. Education among the royal family and the aristocracy was futile in its results, and a new education of the masses resulted. The story of the next century shows that the brilliant and artificial age of Louis XIV could not last.

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