

The Memoirs of the Louis XIV

by

Elizabeth-Charlotte

[Web-Books.Com](#)

The Memoirs of the Louis XIV

Preface.....	3
Madame Elizabeth-Charlotte Of Bavaria, Duchesse D' Orleans	5
Louis XIV	17
Mademoiselle De Fontange	30
Madame De La Valliere.....	31
Madame De Montespan	34
Madame De Maintenon.....	36
The Queen--Consort Of Louis XIV	46
Philippe I., Duc D'orleans	48
Philippe II., Duc D' Orleans, Regent Of France	52
The Affairs Of The Regency.....	60
The Duchesse D'orleans, Wife Of The Regent	79
Marie-Anne Christine Victoire Of Bavaria, The First Dauphine	84
Adelaide Of Savoy, The Second Dauphine	87
The First Dauphin	90
The Duke Of Burgundy, The Second Dauphin.....	94
Petite Madame	95
Henrietta Of England, The First Wife Of Monsieur, Brother Of Louis XIV	96
The Duc De Berri.....	100
The Duchesse De Berri	102
Mademoiselle D'orleans, Louise-Adelaide De Chartres	106
Mademoiselle De Valois, Charlotte-Aglae, Consort Of The Prince Of Modena	108
The Illegitimate Children Of The Regent, Duc D'orleans	112
The Chevalier De Lorraine	114
Philip V., King Of Spain.....	115
The Duchesse Louise-Francisque, Consort Of Louis III., Duc De Bourbon.....	117
The Younger Duchess.....	118
Louis III., Duc De Bourbon	120
Francois-Louis, Prince De Conti.....	123
The Great Princesse De Conti, Daughter Of La Valliere.....	124
The Princess Palatine, Marie-Therese De Bourbon,.....	125
Louise-Elizabeth, Princesse De Conti, Consort Of Louie-Armand De Conti	126
Louie-Armand, Prince De Conti	127
The Abbe Dubois	130
Mr. Law.....	132
Victor Amadeus, King Of Sicily.....	138
The Grand Duchess, Wife Of Cosmo Ii. Of Florence.....	139
The Duchesse De Lorraine, Elizabeth-Charlotte Philippine D'orleans,.....	140
The Duc Du Maine, Louis-Augustus	143
The Duchesse Du Maine, Louise-Benoite, Daughter Of Henri-Jules De Conde.....	145
Louvois	148
Louis XV.....	149
Anecdotes And Historical Particulars Relating To Various Persons.....	150

Preface

The Duchesse d'Orleans, commonly though incorrectly styled the Princess of Bavaria, was known to have maintained a very extensive correspondence with her relations and friends in different parts of Europe. Nearly eight hundred of her letters, written to the Princess Wilhelmina Charlotte of Wales and the Duke Antoine-Ulric of Brunswick, were found amongst the papers left by the Duchess Elizabeth of Brunswick at her death, in 1767. These appeared to be so curious that the Court of Brunswick ordered De Praun, a Privy Councillor, to make extracts of such parts as were most interesting. A copy of his extracts was sent to France, where it remained a long time without being published. In 1788, however, an edition appeared, but so mutilated and disfigured, either through the prudence of the editor or the scissors of the censor, that the more piquant traits of the correspondence had entirely disappeared. The bold, original expressions of the German were modified and enfeebled by the timid translator, and all the names of individuals and families were suppressed, except when they carried with them no sort of responsibility. A great many passages of the original correspondence were omitted, while, to make up for the deficiencies, the editor inserted a quantity of pedantic and useless notes. In spite of all these faults and the existence of more faithful editions, this translation was reprinted in 1807. The existence of any other edition being unknown to its editor, it differed in nothing from the preceding, except that the dates of some of the letters were suppressed, a part of the notes cut out, and some passages added from the Memoirs of Saint-Simon, together with a life, or rather panegyric, of the Princess, which bore no slight resemblance to a village homily.

A copy of the extracts made by M. de Praun fell by some chance into the hands of Count de Veltheim, under whose direction they were published at Strasburg, in 1789, with no other alterations than the correction of the obsolete and vicious orthography of the Princess.

In 1789 a work was published at Dantzick, in Germany, entitled, Confessions of the Princess Elizabeth-Charlotte of Orleans, extracted from her letters addressed, between the years 1702 and 1722, to her former governess, Madame de Harling, and her husband. The editor asserts that this correspondence amounted to nearly four hundred letters. A great part of these are only repetitions of what she had before written to the Princess of Wales and the Duke of Brunswick. Since that period no new collections have appeared, although it is sufficiently well known that other manuscripts are in existence.

In 1820 M. Schutz published at Leipsig the Life and Character of Elizabeth-Charlotte, Duchesse d'Orleans, with an Extract of the more remarkable parts of her Correspondence. This is made up of the two German editions of 1789 and 1791; but the editor adopted a new arrangement, and suppressed such of the dates and facts as he considered useless. His suppressions, however, were not very judicious; without dates one is at a loss to know to what epoch the facts related by the Princess ought to be referred, and the French proper names are as incorrect as in the edition of Strasburg.

Feeling much surprise that in France there should have been no more authentic edition of the correspondence of the Regent-mother than the miserable translation of 1788 and 1807, we have set about rendering a service to the history of French manners by a new and more faithful edition. The present is a translation of the Strasburg edition, arranged in a more appropriate order, with the addition of such other passages as were contained in the German collections. The dates have been inserted wherever they appeared necessary, and notes have been added wherever the text required explanation, or where we wished to compare the assertions of the Princess with other testimonies. The Princess, in the salons of the Palais Royal, wrote in a style not very unlike that which might be expected in the present day from the tenants of its garrets. A more complete biography than any which has hitherto been drawn up is likewise added to the present edition. In other respects we have faithfully followed the original Strasburg edition. The style of the Duchess will be sometimes found a little singular, and her chit-chat indiscreet and often audacious; but we cannot refuse our respect to the firmness and propriety with which she conducted herself in the midst of a hypocritical and corrupt Court. The reader, however, must form his own judgment on the correspondence of this extraordinary woman; our business is, not to excite a prejudice in favour of or against her, but merely to present him with a faithful copy of her letters.

Some doubts were expressed about the authenticity of the correspondence when the mutilated edition of 1788 appeared; but these have long since subsided, and its genuineness is no longer questioned.

Madame Elizabeth-Charlotte Of Bavaria, Duchesse D'Orleans

If my father had loved me as well as I loved him he would never have sent me into a country so dangerous as this, to which I came through pure obedience and against my own inclination. Here duplicity passes for wit, and frankness is looked upon as folly. I am neither cunning nor mysterious. I am often told I lead too monotonous a life, and am asked why I do not take a part in certain affairs. This is frankly the reason: I am old; I stand more in need of repose than of agitation, and I will begin nothing that I cannot, easily finish. I have never learned to govern; I am not conversant with politics, nor with state affairs, and I am now too far advanced in years to learn things so difficult. My son, I thank God, has sense enough, and can direct these things without me; besides, I should excite too much the jealousy of his wife--[Marie- Francoise de Bourbon, the legitimate daughter of Louis XIV. and of Madame de Montespan, Duchesse d'Orleans.]--and his eldest daughter,--[Marie- Louise-Elizabeth d'Orleans, married on the 17th of July, 1710, to Charles of France, Duc de Berri.]--whom he loves better than me; eternal quarrels would ensue, which would not at all suit my views. I have been tormented enough, but I have always forborne, and have endeavoured to set a proper example to my, son's wife and his daughter; for this kingdom has long had the misfortune to be too much governed by women, young and old. It is high time that men should now assume the sway, and this is the reason which has determined me not to intermeddle. In England, perhaps, women may reign without inconvenience; in France, men alone should do so, in order that things may go on well. Why should I torment myself by day and by night? I seek only peace and repose; all that were mine are dead. For whom should I care? My time is past. I must try to live smoothly that I may die tranquilly; and in great public affairs it is difficult, indeed, to preserve one's conscience spotless.

I was born at Heidelberg (1652), in the seventh month. I am unquestionably very ugly; I have no features; my eyes are small, my nose is short and thick, my lips long and flat. These do not constitute much of a physiognomy. I have great hanging cheeks and a large face; my stature is short and stout; my body and my thighs, too, are short, and, upon the whole, I am truly a very ugly little object. If I had not a good heart, no one could endure me. To know whether my eyes give tokens of my possessing wit, they must be examined with a microscope, or it will be difficult to judge. Hands more ugly than mine are not perhaps to be found on the whole globe. The King has often told me so, and has made me laugh at it heartily; for, not being able to flatter even myself that I possessed any one thing which could be called pretty, I resolved to be the first to laugh at my own ugliness; this has succeeded as well as I could have wished, and I must confess that I have seldom been at a loss for something to laugh at. I am naturally somewhat melancholy; when anything happens to afflict me, my left side swells up as if it were filled with water. I am not good at lying in bed; as soon as I awake I must get up. I seldom breakfast, and then only on bread and butter. I take neither chocolate, nor coffee, nor tea, not being able to endure those foreign drugs. I am German in all my habits, and like nothing in eating or drinking which is not conformable to our old customs. I eat no soup but such as I can take with milk, wine, or beer. I cannot bear broth; whenever I eat anything of which it forms a

part, I fall sick instantly, my body swells, and I am tormented with colics. When I take broth alone, I am compelled to vomit, even to blood, and nothing can restore the tone to my stomach but ham and sausages.

I never had anything like French manners, and I never could assume them, because I always considered it an honour to be born a German, and always cherished the maxims of my own country, which are seldom in favor here. In my youth I loved swords and guns much better than toys. I wished to be a boy, and this desire nearly cost me my life; for, having heard that Marie Germain had become a boy by dint of jumping, I took such terrible jumps that it is a miracle I did not, on a hundred occasions, break my neck. I was very gay in my youth, for which reason I was called, in German, Rauschenplatten-gnecht. The Dauphins of Bavaria used to say, "My poor dear mamma" (so she used always to address me), "where do you pick up all the funny things you know?"

I remember the birth of the King of England

[George Louis, Duke of Brunswick Hanover, born the 28th of May, 1660; proclaimed King of England the 12th of August, 1714, by the title of George I.]

as well as if it were only yesterday (1720). I was curious and mischievous. They had put a doll in a rosemary bush for the purpose of making me believe it was the child of which my aunt

[Sophia of Bavaria, married, in 1658, to the Elector of Hanover, was the paternal aunt of Madame. She was the granddaughter of James I, and was thus declared the first in succession to the crown of England, by Act of Parliament, 23rd March, 1707.]

had just lain in; at the same moment I heard the cries of the Electress, who was then in the pains of childbirth. This did not agree with the story which I had been told of the baby in the rosemary bush; I pretended, however, to believe it, but crept to my aunt's chamber as if I was playing at hide-and-seek with little Bulau and Haxthausen, and concealed myself behind a screen which was placed before the door and near the chimney. When the newly born infant was brought to the fire I issued from my hiding-place. I deserved to be flogged, but in honour of the happy event I got quit for a scolding.

The monks of the Convent of Ibourg, to revenge themselves for my having unintentionally betrayed them by telling their Abbot that they had been fishing in a pond under my window, a thing expressly forbidden by the Abbot, once poured out white wine for me instead of water. I said, "I do not know what is the matter with this water; the more of it I put into my wine the stronger it becomes." The monks replied that it was very good wine. When I got up from the table to go into the garden, I should have fallen into the pond if I had not been held up; I threw myself upon the ground and fell fast asleep immediately. I was then carried into my chamber and put to bed. I did not awake until nine o'clock in the evening, when I remembered all that had passed. It was on a Holy Thursday; I complained to the Abbot of the trick which had been played me by the

monks, and they were put into prison. I have often been laughed at about this Holy Thursday.

My aunt, our dear Electress (of Hanover), being at the Hague, did not visit the Princess Royal;

[Maria-Henrietta Stuart, daughter of Charles I. of England, and of Henriette-Marie of France, married, in 1660, to William of Nassau, Prince of Orange; she lost her husband in 1660, and was left pregnant with William-Henry of Nassau, Prince of Orange, and afterwards, by the Revolution of 1688, King of England. This Princess was then preceptress of her son, the Stadtholder of Holland.]

but the Queen of Bohemia

[Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of James I. of England, widow of Frederic V., Duke of Bavaria, Count Palatine of the Rhine, King of Bohemia until the year 1621, mother of the Duchess of Hanover.]

did, and took me with her. Before I set out, my aunt said to me, "Lizette, now take care not to behave as you do in general, and do not wander away so that you cannot be found; follow the Queen step by step, so that she may not have to wait for you."

I replied, "Oh, aunt, you shall hear how well I will behave myself."

When we arrived at the Princess Royal's, whom I did not know, I saw her son, whom I had often played with; after having gazed for a long time at his mother without knowing who she was, I went back to see if I could find any one to tell me what was this lady's name. Seeing only the Prince of Orange, I accosted him thus,--

"Pray, tell me who is that woman with so tremendous a nose?"

He laughed and answered, "That is the Princess Royal, my mother."

I was quite stupefied. That I might compose myself, Mademoiselle Heyde took me with the Prince into the Princess's bedchamber, where we played at all sorts of games. I had told them to call me when the Queen should be ready to go, and we were rolling upon a Turkey carpet when I was summoned; I arose in great haste and ran into the hall; the Queen was already in the antechamber. Without losing a moment, I seized the robe of the Princess Royal, and, making her a low curtsy, at the same moment I placed myself directly before her, and followed the Queen step by step to her carriage; everybody was laughing, but I had no notion of what it was at. When we returned home, the Queen went to find my aunt, and, seating herself upon the bed, burst into a loud laugh.

"Lizette," said she, "has made a delightful visit." And then she told all that I had done, which made the Electress laugh even more than the Queen. She called me to her and said,--

"Lizette, you have done right; you have revenged us well for the haughtiness of the Princess."

My brother would have had me marry the Margrave of Dourlach, but I had no inclination towards him because he was affected, which I never could bear. He knew very well that I was not compelled to refuse him, for he was married long before they thought of marrying me to Monsieur. Still he thought fit to send to me a Doctor of Dourlach, for the purpose of asking me whether he ought to obey his father and marry the Princess of Holstein. I replied that he could not do better than to obey his father; that he had promised me nothing, nor had I pledged myself to him; but that, nevertheless, I was obliged to him for the conduct he had thought fit to adopt. This is all that passed between us.

Once they wanted to give me to the Duke of Courlande; it was my aunt d'Hervod who wished to make that match. He was in love with Marianne, the daughter of Duke Ulric of Wurtemberg; but his father and mother would not allow him to marry her because they had fixed their eyes on me. When, however, he came back from France on his way home, I made such an impression on him that he would not hear of marriage, and requested permission to join the army.

I once received a very sharp scolding in a short journey from Mannheim to Heidelberg. I was in the carriage with my late father, who had with him an envoy, from the Emperor, the Count of Konigseck. At this time I was as thin and light as I am now fat and heavy. The jolting of the carriage threw me from my seat, and I fell upon the Count; it was not my fault, but I was nevertheless severely rebuked for it, for my father was not a man to be trifled with, and it was always necessary to be very circumspect in his presence.

When I think of conflagrations I am seized with a shivering fit, for I remember how the Palatinate was ravaged for more than three months. Whenever I went to sleep I used to think I saw Heidelberg all in flames; then I used to wake with a start, and I very narrowly escaped an illness in consequence of those outrages.

[The burning of the Palatinate in 1674--a horrible devastation commanded by Louis, and executed by Turenne.]

Upon my arrival in France I was made to hold a conference with three bishops. They all differed in their creeds, and so, taking the quintessence of their opinions, I formed a religion of my own.

It was purely from the affection I bore to her that I refused to take precedence of our late Electress; but making always a wide distinction between her aid and the Duchess of Mecklenbourg, as well as our Electress of Hanover, I did not hesitate to do so with respect to both the latter. I also would not take precedence of my mother. In my childhood I wished to bear her train, but she would never permit me.

I have been treated ill ever since my marriage this is in some degree the fault of the Princess Palatine,--[Anne de Gonzague, Princess Palatine, who took so active a part in the troubles of the Fronde.]--who prepared my marriage contract; and it is by the contract that the inheritance is governed. All persons bearing the title of Madame have pensions from the King; but as they have been of the same amount for a great many years past they are no longer sufficient.

I would willingly have married the Prince of Orange, for by that union I might have hoped to remain near my dear Electress (of Hanover).

Upon my arrival at Saint-Germain I felt as if I had fallen from the clouds. The Princess Palatine went to Paris and there fixed me. I put as good a face upon the affair as was possible; I saw very well that I did not please my husband much, and indeed that could not be wondered at, considering my ugliness; however, I resolved to conduct myself in such a manner towards Monsieur that he should become accustomed to me by my attentions, and eventually should be enabled to endure me. Immediately upon my arrival, the King came to see me at the Chateau Neuf, where Monsieur and I lived; he brought with him the Dauphin, who was then a child of about ten years old. As soon as I had finished my toilette the King returned to the old Chateau, where he received me in the Guards' hall, and led me to the Queen, whispering at the same time,--"Do not be frightened, Madame; she will be more afraid of you than you of her." The King felt so much the embarrassment of my situation that he would not quit me; he sat by my side, and whenever it was necessary for me to rise, that is to say, whenever a Duke or a Prince entered the apartment, he gave me a gentle push in the side without being perceived.

According to the custom of Paris, when a marriage is made, all property is in common; but the husband has the entire control over it. That only which has been brought by way of dowry is taken into the account; for this reason I never knew how much my husband received with me. After his death, when I expected to gain my cause at Rome and to receive some money, the disagreeable old Maintenon asked me in the King's name to promise that if I gained the cause I would immediately cede the half of the property to my son; and in case of refusal I was menaced with the King's displeasure. I laughed at this, and replied that I did not know why they threatened me, for that my son was in the course of nature my heir, but that it was at least just that he should stay until my death before he took possession of my property, and that I knew the King was too equitable to require of me anything but what was consistent with justice. I soon afterwards received the news of the loss of my cause, and I was not sorry for it, on account of the circumstance I have just related.

When the Abby de Tesse had convinced the Pope that his people had decided without having read our papers, and that they had accepted 50,000 crowns from the Grand Duke to pronounce against me, he began weeping, and said, "Am I not an unhappy man to be obliged to trust such persons?" This will show what sort of a character the Pope was.

When I arrived in France I had only an allowance of a hundred louis d'or for my pocket-money; and this money was always consumed in advance. After my mother's death, when

my husband received money from the Palatinate, he increased this allowance to two hundred louis; and once, when I was in his good graces, he gave me a thousand louis. Besides this, the King had given me annually one thousand louis up to the year before the marriage of my son. That supported me, but as I would not consent to the marriage I was deprived of this sum, and it has never been restored to me. On my first journey to Fontainebleau, the King would have given me 2,000 pistoles, but that Monsieur begged him to keep half of them for Madame, afterwards the Queen of Spain.--[Marie-Louise d'Orleans, born in 1662, married, in 1679, to Charles II, King of Spain.]

I cared very little about it, and, nevertheless, went to Fontainebleau, where I lost all my money at Hoca. Monsieur told me, for the purpose of vexing me, of the good office he had done me with the King; I only laughed at it, and told him that, if Madame had chosen to accept the thousand pistoles from my hands, I would very freely have given them to her. Monsieur was quite confused at this, and, by way of repairing the offence he had committed, he took upon himself the payment of 600 louis d'or, which I had lost over and above the thousand pistoles.

I receive now only 456,000 francs, which is exactly consumed within the year; if, they could have given me any less they would. I would not be thought to make claims to which I am not entitled, but it should be remembered that Monsieur has had the money of my family.

I was very glad when, after the birth of my daughter,

[Elizabeth-Charlotte d'Orleans, born in 1676, married, in 1697, to the Duc de Lorraine. Philippe d'Orleans, afterwards Regent of France, was born in 1674; there were no other children by this marriage.]

my husband proposed separate beds; for, to tell the truth, I was never very fond of having children. When he proposed it to me, I answered, "Yes, Monsieur, I shall be very well contented with the arrangement, provided you do not hate me, and that you will continue to behave with some kindness to me." He promised, and we were very well satisfied with each other. It was, besides, very disagreeable to sleep with Monsieur; he could not bear any one to touch him when he was asleep, so that I was obliged to lie on the very edge of the bed; whence it sometimes happened that I fell out like a sack. I was therefore enchanted when Monsieur proposed to me in friendly terms, and without any anger, to lie in separate rooms.

I obeyed the late Monsieur by not troubling him with my embraces, and always conducted myself towards him with respect and submission.

He was a good sort of man, notwithstanding his weaknesses, which, indeed, oftener excited my pity than my anger. I must confess that I did occasionally express some impatience, but when he begged pardon, it was all forgotten.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

