# Louis XIV. and the Gypsies.

### A Strange Story of the Reason for His Sweeping Edict Against Them.

Gypsies, or Bohemians, as they were called in early days, made their first appearance in France in 1427. During the reign of Louis XIV. the criminal acts of these itinerants assumed such intolerable proportions that the King issued an edict commanding that all male members of their bands be arrested and sent to the galleys and the women and children consigned to the poorhouses. The execution of the order was committed to the famous La Reynie, the first lieutenant-general of police.

It was the custom in France at that period, when men and women of noble birth were involved in criminal acts outside of affairs of state, to indicate them in police reports only by the first initial of their surnames. Those interested in learning the identity of the Count de B——, one of the principal actors of the incident about to be related, may discover it by referring to "La Correspondance de Mme. la Duchesse d'Orleans (Charlotte of Bavaria)." His name frequently occurs in her letters in connection with that of her husband.

This Count de B—— was a high favorite at court, but was violent, unscrupulous and quarrelsome, and of a reputation so bad that he was suspected of having had a hand in the poisoning of a dearly loved Princess, Henrietta of England, sister of Charles II. and first wife of the Duke of Orleans.

A rich relative, M. de Saintaine, who lived in a country house buried in the woods of Berri, had promised to make the Count his heir should he die unmarried. As the income from his estate was 100,000 francs and his personal property amounted to 1,200,000 francs, the cupidity of the Count was aroused and he proceeded to put machinery in motion for the early assimilation of his relative's assets.

M. de Saintaine was a bachelor at his fiftieth year and the chances of his marrying seemed small. He was pious to excess, was greatly esteemed in his neighborhood. He maintained his establishment lavishly; had dogs and horses and hunted closely his vast estate, but he persisted in managing his own financial affairs, and accordingly attended neighboring fairs, where he sold the various farms. One of these fairs was held annually at Chatre, a nearby town. There M. de Saintaine appeared as usual in charge of a large herd of cattle and a great store of wheat, from the sale of which he realized 20,000 francs. This money he put in a portmanteau strapped to his saddle bags and late in the day started for his home, a journey of five leagues, which could only be accomplished before night by rapid travel.

When he had gone to the fair at Chatre he was followed by a priest of his neighborhood, a man reputed to be associated with a band of robbers, and by two companion rogues. On his way home M. de Saintaine was joined by the priest, who urged him to sup and pass the night at his parsonage, but the other politely refused and only urged his horses to a more rapid trot. When, however, two of the horses fell dead and both thighs of a servant riding one of them were broken, nothing remained for him but to accept the hospitality of the priest.

The parsonage was a very ancient building, part of a seigniorial castle, constructed at the time of the Crusaders. One wing only had been rebuilt, but it communicated with the remains of the original structure by subterranean passages. The chapel of the castle had become the parish church and was connected with some of the rooms of the parsonage. An abutting cemetery occupied the space of the former garden of the castle. What was formerly a ditch protecting its approach had been filled with water. A wooden bridge crossing this led to the entrance to the parsonage. On the other side was a great forest which in former times constituted the baronial park. Opposite the church and cemetery was the priest's garden.

The house was in charge of a niece of the priest, a girl of modest demeanor and very beautiful, Julienne by name. At the sight of a stranger she became confused, her face changed from white to red, and her eyes filled with tears at the brutal command of her uncle to entertain his guest.

A servant entered and made a signal to the priest, which De Saintaine saw reflected in a mirror. The priest arose and excused himself, saying that he was called to the bedside of a sick man. "But, uncle, who is ill?" asked the niece. "Big Peter." "I have just seen him pass by." "You are mistaken," replied the uncle sharply." "John has just told me, and he is better informed than you." The tone of the priest's voice was so harsh and it was so clear he was lying that De Saintaine regretted he had accepted the hospitality of such a man.

The moon was rising. De Saintaine walked to a window to look at the landscape. To his astonishment he saw the priest walking to and fro in front of the house engaged in animated talk with two other men. Suddenly one of them took from his pocket three knives, giving one to the priest, the other to his companion, and putting the third in the breast of his coat.

After the departure of the uncle, Julienne had not removed her eyes from the embroidery on which she was working, although she appeared annoyed at the surveillance she was subjected to by the servant. When the maid at last fell into a doze De Saintaine took advantage of this to converse with the niece. At his approach she lifted her head and indicated rapidly that he was in peril, and that she was determined to save him, but to accomplish it he must obey her implicitly.

When the priest returned he remarked casually that one Jacome, a bourgeois of Bourges, who was at the fair at la Chatre, would be, with the permission of De Saintaine, a guest at supper.

This second visitor proved to be Combons, the man who distributed the knives. His appearance in the house confirmed De Saintaine in the opinion that he had been caught in a trap. When De Saintaine was shown to his room in anticipation of the supper hour, Julienne managed to whisper to him to bolt the door and expect further news from her. About twenty minutes after he heard a slight noise above his head, a little trap opened in the ceiling, a white hand appeared and a paper was dropped therefrom, containing these word:

They are determined to kill and rob you. At supper they will offer you drugged wine. This will throw you into a deep sleep, when you will be killed. John, the groom, and I will save you and myself at the same time. Show no fear to your companions; they will not kill you until you are asleep. When you return to your room wait patiently our arrival and above all do not be alarmed if we enter the room in an unusual way. Burn this note and pull back the bolt on the door.

The supper was uncommonly good and general gayety prevailed. A sign [illegible] De Saintaine the drugged bottle. He made a pretence of drinking the wine. During a pause in the conversation De Saintaine pretended to be sleepy and asked permission of his host to retire at about 11 o'clock.

To assure himself against surprise, he tried to push the bolts of the door; but they were not in place, having evidently been removed while he was at supper. All he could do was to close the door and barricade it with a heavy bureau. This was barely done when a light noise attracted his attention in a part of the room near the bed. He walked there, taking the precaution to arm himself with his sword and pistols. They were useless, for while at supper the charge in each had been drawn. Near the bed in a panel in the wall, masked by a portrait, was pushed back. In the opening stood John and Julienne, each holding a dark lantern.

They signalled him to approach. As he joined them the sound of a key being turned in the lock of the barricaded door attracted his attention. An attempt to open it was prevented by the furniture placed against it.

There was no time to lose; the enemy was at hand. John took De Saintaine by the hand, with the valuable portmanteau in the grip of the other, and led him into the mysterious passage by which they had reached the panel, which consisted of a large sheet of iron. They hurried their flight through a number of subterranean lanes, from which they emerged into the open country at least a mile from the parsonage and on the opposite side of the canal. There two horses were tethered; John mounted the one and De Saintaine the other; with Julienne on a pillion behind him. As they rode on through the forest, the moon, lighting the side of a hill visible through a clearing disclosed a body of men, members, no doubt of the band of brigands of which the priest was the chief. At daybreak they reached De Saintaine's house. Later in the morning they set out for Bourges, where Julienne was placed in temporary charge of the sisters of a religious retreat.

The priest, furious at the escape of his guest and the loss of his expected booty, hastened to anticipate an accusation against him by lodging a complaint against De Saintaine for the abduction of a minor and the ruin of her reputation so that marriage for her had become impossible.

The priest, however, counted without his host. De Saintaine had fallen in love with the girl, and although trembling at the wrath of the terrible Count de B——, he married her.

When six months after the news of this event reached the Count there came with it a suggestion of the possibility of an heir to inherit the great fortune of De Saintaine. The Count's rage exceeded all bounds, and because of his threats and persecutions De Saintaine died shortly after the birth of a son, leaving the widow and boy in possession of all of his property.

Three years had passed. The young Louis brought up by his mother as befitted the inheritor of such great wealth, was living with her in a house near one of the gates of the city of Bourges, when a band of Gypsies who had been encamped between St. Germain and Versailles established themselves in the immediate neighborhood. The nine men and women who made up this band one day engaged in what appeared to be a violent quarrel in the presence of a considerable group of spectators, and a man and woman of the tribe, active participants in the dispute, after the ceremonies customary with these people under similar circumstances, were driven out of the camp, together with their little daughter.

The same evening young Louis de Saintaine disappeared from his home and all trace of him was lost. His inconsolable mother expended great sums of money and employed an army of agents in search of him, but with no success, though it was the general opinion that the Gypsies were concerned in the kidnapping. Those of the band remaining in the neighborhood of Bourges denied participation in the crime, and asserted that the man and woman whom they had expelled were the culprits. After a month the remainder left the neighborhood.

Four years later a priest of Bourges returning from Rome, reported that he had met with this same community of Gypsies encamped in the neighborhood of Sienne, that he had learned that the couple driven from the tribe when at Bourges were in reality what were called the king and queen, that their apparent expulsion, was a ruse to divert suspicion from the other members of the band, and that the couple expelled were, in reality, the abductors of young De Saintaine.

At this juncture Mme. de Saintaine died. Ten days later the Count de B—— demanded letters of administration upon the estate of the husband and wife, the Count agreeing to care for the property, while enjoying the income, until the fate of young De Saintaine should be definitely established. Other relatives opposed this application, but the influence of the Count de B—— at court was so for[illegible] placed in possession of the great [illegible].

The affair slumbered for several years, when one day in 1681 Mme. de Maintenon, who was caring in secret for the children of Mme. de Montespon, was surprised to see the Duke du Maine, the latter's eldest son, enter her room leading by the hand a handsome lad of about his own age, clothed in rags. Following them was a young Gypsy woman 18 or 20 years old, who explained that the Count de B—— had bribed her father and mother to kidnap the lad. Both of her parents had died at Venice, but before dying they had made deposition before the Venetian authorities to that effect. Moreover, she had with her two letters written by the Count de B—— to her father, arranging with him that their tribe should make way with young De Saintaine.

Nothing could give Mme. de Maintenon more pleasure than these revelations. It enabled her to annoy the Duchess of Orleans, a bitter enemy, and the special protectress of the Count de B——. She made this affair her own; she spoke to the king in relation to it and inquiries were immediately instituted to disentangle the plot. The identity of young De Saintaine was established without trouble, and the Count de B—— was forced to relinquish the riches he had come to regard as his beyond possibility of alienation. All that saved him from the gallows was the powerful protection of the Duke of Orleans.

On account of the part this band of Gypsies had taken in the abduction of young De Saintaine, in July, 1682, Louis XIV. issued the severe edict which he made applicable to every one of the race as if all were concerned in the particular crime.—New York Sun.

### An Eccentric Bishop.

Bishop Wilson of Calcutta had as housekeeper a venerable lady who remembered the duel between Sir Philip Francis and Warren Hastings on Aug. 17, 1780. On entering the cathedral on a Sunday morning, fully robed, lawn sleeves and all, and passing the pew where the old lady sat he would pause and give her the "kiss of peace" before all the congregation, and this although he had met her at breakfast.

His sermons, too, were racy. Preaching against dishonesty, especially in horseflesh, as one of the great English failings in India, he went on, "Nor are we, servants of the altar, free from yielding to this temptation." Pointing to the occupant of the reading desk below him: "There is my dear and venerable brother the archdeacon, down there. He is an instance of it. He once sold me a horse. It was unsound. "I was a stranger, and he took me in."

# DEAD LETTER OFFICE:

### THIRTY THOUSAND MISSIVES A YEAR FAIL TO ARRIVE.

**A Department of the Postoffice at Washington Where There Is a Blending of Joy and Sorrow—Some Curious Articles Found in the Mails.**

How rarely a letter miscarries when its writer has ordinary intelligence and is familiar with the conventions which pertain to postal transmission in the United tates! If the person to whom the letter is sent has moved, with little delay his letter pursues him. If carelessness by the sender confounds numbers, streets, counties, towns, even states, with what infinite pains are the mistakes corrected by the postal clerks! Yet, with all this care more than 30,000 unclaimed letters and parcels daily find their way to the Dead Letter office at Washington.

Visiting the fine new postoffice structure in Washington, one leaves the ground floor by an elevator for the Dead Letter office. Left below are hopes that are fast being carried to fruition; approaching are those which have failed of it—not yet hopelessly failed, for passing down the corridor of the Dead Letter office, watching the more than a hundred clerks as they rapidly tear the wrapper from letter, from paper, from parcel, one feels that, though sacred privacy be invaded, an ultimate joy may possibly succeed it. And not always is this privacy invaded, for, while more than 8,300,000 letters and parcels were opened during the year just passed, 1,000,000 were delivered unopened to the owners, 800,000 of them to foreign countries.

No longer, as formerly, is there a distinctive dead letter museum, but some of the curious articles of interest found in the mails are included in the general postal museum, on the ground floor of the building.

The first thing which the visitor encounters is the pathetic case of soldiers' photographs. As he turns leaf by leaf of it he fancies the weary waiting at the home fireside for the face of the soldier boy who never came; alas, many times the lad himself found sepulchre on the battlefield or died in the hospital, and this priceless memento would so have comforted the mourning hearts who perchance waited long and hopelessly his coming. The faces are faded, the paper yellow with age, of a style and fashion long passed away, strange in feature to those who look on them now, yet there was a time when the lovelight from each pic[illegible]

From the corridor, illustrative of mail transportation from the earliest days when it was undertaken, and its methods in the most remote and inaccessible parts do duty for the "express mail," one enters a room consecrated mostly to the unique and curious collection selected from the Dead Letter office.

In the glass cases which contain the ehibit the pathetic and the ridiculous touch other, and one may at the same moment be moved to smiles or tears, while a shiver of horror creeps over him at the sight of an "infernal machine" fortunately unclaimed or a dynamite bomb not less infernal.

Balls, bullets and various mementos of war are numerous, and some of the stilettos and other side arms of beautiful workmanship. Near by there is a pair of handcuffs, which perchance might tell a story.

The reptile world, among other varieties, is represented by a rattlesnake, a horned toad, a tarantula and numerous crocodiles, mostly alive when sent. There are a jawbone, possibly of an ass, with all its teeth firm set, and several sets of false teeth, for which the corresponding gums have perchance worn themselves out with waiting; a skull, white and grinning, while its fellow members are dust; an Indian's head, Indian moccasions, and many pairs of baby shoes, shaped by the little feet which have worn them, and which, alas, failed to tell their little tender story to an absent father.

A complete layette suggests the loving thought which sent a welcome to some expected baby guest, with dolls of all races and varieties, from Chinese to walnut, together with toys of many descriptions.

Here are the wedding cake which some bride had to do without, a large box of raisins which might have enabled some other bride to make her own cake, and boxes of candy—"sweets" which never reached "the sweet."

There are fine ivory carvings and wooden ones, running the gamut from a circle comb to the "Lion of Lucerne."

There are South African gems of various settings; watches, lockets, seals, chains, rings, charms and hair jewelry.

Faces have here for years looked from quaint old ivory miniatures, with hope of a recognition which has never come—one of a Chinese girl, so far from home that she could scarcely expect it. Daguerreotypes, fadeless on their silver plates, have seen themselves superseded by newer and more popular methods of the sun's printing—perhaps the face itself yas long ago superseded by a fairer.

Toilet sets, hairpins, thimbles, needles, shears and a wire bust[illegible] are feminine in quality, while ra[illegible] saws, canteens and what are ap[illegible]ently bound books, but used to conta[illegible] whiskey, betray the masculine.

The prayers of some fair penitent were possibly hindered for want of the rosary which never reached its destination.

A tea kettle, a set of teaspoons and china cups suggest afternoon tea; an unbroken lamp chimney testifies to the deftness with which it is possible for "Uncle Sam" to handle the fragile. A fine parasol pictures "my lady" setting out for a promenade, while a tangle of umbrellas may stand for quickened consciences striving to return those they have borrowed or taken.

There are musical instruments of many sorts and varieties, and one queries whose fingers may have drawn the wheezy notes from the accordion, or perchance with the guitar sighed his soul out beneath the window of his love.

In the lower part of one of the cases is a promiscuous jumble of everything from a wooden sabot to a finely cured ham, soldier equipments predominating.

Of curious letters there are many, both in contents and superscriptions, but strangest of all is a love missive written on a board one by three feet in dimensions. "Dick," the writer, was inspired to this eccentricity while attending a "board" meeting, and wrote to "Hattie," reproaching her for her silence. In due course of time "Hattie" was discovered and notified by the Dead Letter official that such a billet dou awaited her, with 95 cents due in extra postage. This she declined to pay, saying that she had no use for "lumber" nor for "Dick." So some of the romances and the tragedies of life leave in this little room their record, interesting in the "touch of nature which makes the whole world kin;" for who at some hour of his life has not been swayed by the different emotions which through these relics of a bygone day have striven for expression?

What mysteries in the unopened letter, how potential for joy, for sorrow; how freighted with happiness or misery, and how far reaching in its results! The spoken word may be forgotten by him who utters it, and fade from the memory of him who hears: written, it is freighted with a power before which even judge and jury bow.

"What might have been" but for these mischances of the Dead Letter office no one can say; if by them joy has been frustrated, tragedy has been averted, and so the sum of human hap[illegible] as much as would appear.—New York Tribune.

### The Food Value of Eggs.

Eggs are very nourishing and represent two important elements, fats and proteids, in an easily assimilated form, white, or pure albumen, and one-half half ounces, of which one ounce is white, or pure albumen and one-half ounce yolk. The nutritive value of the yolk is greater than that of the white, though the bulk and weight are smaller. Its solid constituents are about one-half of its fat. Fresh eggs, properly prepared, are readily digestible. The best mode of preparation is whipped raw, or cooked for 20 or 30 minutes at a temperature of about 160 degrees (curdled). The yolks are more easily digested when boiled hard, and the whites are also easily digested when hard boiled, providing care is used to reduce the coagulated white to minute particles which may readily be dissolved by the gastric juice. A single egg is equal to a dozen oysters —Food Health.

### Rare Fruit of Sulu.

In the island of Sulu grows the durian, which is about the size of a muskmelon. Its exterior presents somewhat the appearance of a chestnut burr, being prickly and tough; within the fruit is white and cheese-like, and owing to this peculiarity the American soldiers dubbed it "vegetable limburger." The mangosteen is another of the rare fruits of the island. It is the size of an average orange, chocolate colored, and has a very brittle skin. Inside four white sections contain a colorless liquid. This is the rarest fruit known, and the only one, so it is claimed, that Queen Victoria ever tasted, there being no way of preserving the fruit for a sufficient period after plucking to permit of shipping it to any distance.

### Artificial Flowers Made of Wood.

One of the most beautiful uses to which wood-fibre has been put is the manufacture of artificial flowers. Thus far the only flowers made of this material are pink roses, violets and white and purple lilacs, with the necessary leaves. The violets are made in Philadelphia, while the other "blooms" come from Japan, the roses selling for a dollar each. The imitation is remarkably close, both in color, form and texture.

Until the last years of the last century Lyons was Europe's chief silk market. Milan gradually ousted it from the position, and in 1902 its receipts were 37 1-2 percent larger than those of Lyons.