

"To keep his mind easy she concealed Celia's absence from him. This could be easily done, as Celia, being the older and stronger, was accustomed to do the larger share of the camp work, and often rode the pony all day; besides his mind was becoming clouded and his perceptions dull. Poor Mrs. S. bewailed their sad lot, and sat bathing her husband's burning temples with water that Emma procured at every sink-hole or water-course. Night came, but she held slowly on her way, stopping to feed at midnight, then moving solemnly along under the moonlight. Her father grew worse, the heart of the poor girl almost failed as the morning of the second day dawned and no Celia. Her father lay dying and she could do nothing. She was faint from watching and fasting. Her eyes were strained and bloodshot with gazing over the sun-parched desert. They fell in with no travelers. Heaven only knew what had become of Celia. Her mother was almost frantic with grief over her unconscious husband; she could seek no comfort there, and racked with anxiety and foreboding she drove on into the pitiless noon. Then away over the sandy plain a little cloud of dust sprang up, it approached along the road. Emma shut her eyes, it was nothing, she would not be deceived again, she was almost blind with watching, and this was only a fancy; but the cloud traveled on, and by and by three riders appeared in the distance, and as they approached she saw one was a woman; she did not faint with joy, she had to drive the mules; but on they came, and it was Celia. She had ridden to Denver, procured a surgeon and assistant, and only stopping to change horses, set out with them for the lonely wagon on the desolate plains. She had ridden almost constantly for the fifty-four hours she had been absent.

"Young-lady-like or not, I saw these two men afterwards, and they said, that for womanly dignity, allied to an unflinching courage and endurance, she bore away the palm from all other women they had ever seen.

"The case looked serious, and the young surgeon ordered a halt. They had now neared the more fertile region of the Platte Valley, where the water is cooler and clearer. Here they camped by a clump of cottonwoods on the bank of a little stream. The sick man was attended to, the wound carefully probed, the bullet removed, soothing applications made, proper

medicine administered; the tent was pitched, and for some time the family lingered to give the patient time to rally. Dr. B. remained till he was out of danger; of course he fell in love with Celia, who was just as lovely as she is now, and although possessing such firmness and daring, she was, to a casual observer, only a sweet-voiced, womanly girl; she did not parade her heroism in the mannish style of— But here the narrator descended into personal abuse of some of our well-known strong-minded women, for whom he knew I entertained a deep respect and friendship.

At last he resumed. "Well, when Sheldon recovered sufficiently, they went on to Denver, where they remained for a short time. Here the young surgeon pressed his suit. He was rising rapidly in his profession, and begged Celia to join her fate to his, but she refused to leave her parents, and they parted. The family then went into the mountains, and establishing them in a log-cabin, Mr. Sheldon commenced gulch mining on Clear Creek. In his weak condition, and unused to labor, the work was too severe, and he fell a victim to that tedious malady the 'mountain fever.' Funds were running low, something must be done, and the girls had a slab dining-room built, and opened a boarding-house. The gulch was swarming with miners living in every conceivable way. They were soon crowded with boarders. They cooked, washed, baked, and made money, for rates were high. They carried their gentle lady-like manners through it all, and there was not one of those rough miners but would have cut off his right arm rather than have spoken rudely in their presence. Mr. S., relieved from the anxiety of present want began to mend. The mother too, began to think it was not so terribly degrading to work, and as the nursing of her husband grew easier, lent her feeble aid to the general good. When Sheldon was fit for business, the girls put a good round sum into his hands, which enabled him to commence gulching on a large scale, for those days. He made money, got possession of an excellent gold bed further up, built a stamp mill, worked up the mine, and a few years ago sold out for a round million. I will show you the old people's residence in Denver when we go down; not like the St. Louis mansion, it is true, but grand and elegant, with broad piazzas and flowery lawn, where young trees are growing."

"But what became of the young surgeon?" said I, as we rose to go in.

"Oh, dear! you women always have an ear for the main plot of a story. Well, he sought out Celia, and as soon as she would consent to leave her parents married her; they live in Denver, and are among its first citizens. Emma married a New York capitalist, who spends with her six months of the year in Colorado. Arthur turned up last year as clown in a traveling circus. His father rescued him and brought him home. It is kept still (rich folks can do such things you know), the outside world only knows that Mr. Sheldon has a son come home, and thinks it is 'nice' just as he is getting old. I saw him last week, and he is penitent and steady, superintending his mother's garden and conservatory. Here is Mrs. B. now sitting down to the piano," said he, looking back into the lighted room; "what a spiritual face she has, and such white hands, you would hardly think she had driven a mule team over the plains, and shot buffalo with a Henry rifle, would you?"

#### PICTURES.

BY SARAH A. KING.

PICTURE my life that is to come,  
As I should like it to be,  
In a quiet nook, green hills among,  
Somewhere, in sight of the sea,  
Where my music shall be the birds'  
glad song,  
And the waves' grandmelody.

AND I picture my years in that calm  
retreat  
So peaceful, so glad and free,  
While Nature's voices shall ever  
repeat  
Their lessons and signs to me,  
And my soul shall be filled with a  
love complete,  
And boundless as the sea.

AND I picture my days that shall come  
and go,  
In their sunshine and their shade,  
Unveiled by the hollow pomp and  
show,  
The glitter and parade,  
And free from this burden of care  
and woe,  
So heavily on me laid.

AND my heart grows full of a great  
content—  
But alas! alas! for me!  
And alas for the pictures with  
beauty blent;  
For they can never be—  
They are far from my life, and my  
life's intent,  
As the stars are from the sea.

## MARIE DE SÉVIGNÉ.

BY ROSA GRAHAM.



THE reign of Louis XIV., "Le Grand Monarque," of France, produced and fostered in state, field, and literature, a host of great and imperishable geniuses; while the extent and importance of the events therein included and paralleled, signalize the epoch to the admiring interest of posterity. In the world of letters, we find such comprehensive mentalities as Corneille, Racine, Pascal, De Rochefoucauld, and others equally as brilliant; intrigue was never more forcibly exemplified than in Richelieu and his aids; the glory of the arms of France was sustained by notable leaders; while the secret workings of court and society sufficiently romancize the epoch, and form an inexhaustible fund for modern curiosity to prey upon. But for the corruption that so openly and shamelessly infested every grade of society, from the low and uncultivated peasantry to the loftiest retreats of rank and genius, the reign of the great monarch would be wholly worthy the prestige its dimmed glory obtains with present humanity.

The women of France contributed to a remarkable extent to the brilliancy of this era. The seventeenth century proves most satisfactorily the superior capacities of the gentler sex, not only in letters, but in political intrigue, and the sterner arts of war. In letters we find such names as De Sévigné, Scudery, and others of similar mold; while the fame of the daughter of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, "La Grande Mademoiselle," as the nation proudly christened her, was at its height.

At that epoch, French women as a class were better educated, more given to intellectual pursuits, than the women of other countries. Many of the ladies of rank were educated by renowned and talented men. These studied the solid parts of learning; were versed in the classics and church divinity; and the glorious literature of the day was universally cultivated. Again, there was at this era a lack of what we term accomplishments, such as music, painting, etc. Chroniclers of the times tell us

that these talents were absorbed entirely by professionals, and with the exception of Ninon de L'Enclos no mention is made of musical proficiency. Ladies in France passed much time at their tapestry-frames, and were ordinarily attended by *demoiselles de compagnie*, who read aloud to the workers; and in this attractive way much information was secured to the most frivolous, and the average intellect correspondingly heightened and strengthened. "L'esprit était une dignité," one has justly declared of this era.

In epistolary style the Frenchwomen of the seventeenth century exhibited most decisively their mental capacities. Compare the witty, sparkling, living epistles of De Sévigné, De Maintenon, Scudéry, and others, with the dry, statistical productions of Evelyn, Pepys, and Lord Clarendon, for the better comprehension of the combination of grace and profundity that distinguish the former. And this was a century previous to the days of Horace Walpole and Lady Montagu, who were the first fair letter-writers that England could boast.

The age of Louis XIV. was emphatically a letter-writing age. The stirring events of court and state furnished ample material for racy correspondence; the sustaining of which none understood and enjoyed better than these feminine chroniclers of the times. The graceful and easy vein in which these voluminous epistles are written, is owing much to the fact that the custom of dictation was prevalent, and, therefore, letter-writing became correspondingly conversational, and necessarily informal in tone. The Duchess de Bourgogne and Madame de Caylus ordinarily were the amanuenses of De Maintenon, and a marked distinction in style exists between the dictated letters and those written by herself.

Thus did France take the lead in intellectual tastes and achievements, as in the personal *mâcheté* and polish that is *sui generis* to the nation. But heart and soul sicken and revolt at the character and inner life of the majority of her gifted women; and, for this reason, the virtuous few that preserved intact their innate principles of right and decorum, in the midst of the corruption and laxity of morals so prevalent and so generally contagious, are worthy of more extensive appreciation and laudation than posterity has yet accorded them.

Among these, the name of Marie

De Sévigné shines forth a star undimmed by the blackness and unscrupulousness of the times. Gifted with uncommon wit and genius, beautiful and attractive in person and manner, the unsullied purity of her life and character assuredly mark her a rare and wonderful woman, when we consider her numerous temptations, and the universal profligacy of the court of Louis XIV. But, oddly enough, the name of De Sévigné strikes not as familiar a chord in modern memory as the names of De Maintenon, De Chevreuse, and others of indefinite, if not of unquestionable, status; whose background reveals no deed or quality worthy of perpetuation. De Sévigné is admired by the few who possess sufficient knowledge of the language to appreciate the peculiarities of her genius, and to trace the virtues of heart and character so easily recognizable in her productions. But translation reveals little to foreigners of the "rare woman of France," and the name of De Sévigné is unjustly kept back from the admiration it merits, and the general world deprived of the praiseworthy model it typifies. We might seek far in our own superior age, when virtue and true womanhood are essential attendants on all claimants to respectability, for a more perfect type of femininity than Marie De Sévigné presented in the degenerate days of Louis XIV.

Marie De Rabutin was the daughter of the Baron De Chantal and of Marie De Coulanges. Losing her father in childhood, she was placed under the charge of her uncle, the Abbé De Livry, whom she immortalizes to posterity under the name of "*Le bien bon*." Her training was intrusted to Ménage and Chapelain, and the convent education, so general in those days, was omitted in her case.

At the age of seventeen she contracted an unfortunate marriage with Henri De Sévigné, a dissolute man of rank, who was totally incapable of appreciating the superior moral and affectional nature of the woman he made his wife. One conversant with the peculiarly loving and sensitive organization that is reflected in every line left to us of her admirable productions can readily realize the dearth and heart-hunger of her marital experience, and account for the birth of that all-absorbing maternal passion, which has been so universally condemned by her critics as absurd, unnatural, and disgusting.

This union, so ill-assorted, and necessarily so humiliating to the refined, lofty nature of Marie De Sévigné, was of short duration. Henri, Marquis De Sévigné, was killed in a duel at Paris, about the year 1647.

Madame De Sévigné was twenty-six years of age when she first appeared as a widow at the court of Louis XIV. The portraits of that day represent her as possessing a wealth of fair hair, a fine complexion, a countenance beaming with sense and vivacity, with more of animation and expressive winningness than regular beauty. Her sharp but good-natured wit, her good sense, combined with the fascination of her manner, and the natural charity and kindness she invariably displayed, made her a great favorite at court; and a distinguished woman in literary and social circles.

From the date of her husband's death, Madame De Sévigné devoted herself exclusively to her children; refusing persistently all propositions to re-marry, and disposing of the admirers who presumed to question her purity with a tact that transformed their licentious intentions into earnest and life-long friendships. Among these were numbered the sage Turenne, the Prince De Conti, her cousin, Comte De Bussy, and Fouquet, whose history and trial she so admirably depicts in her letters to M. De Pomponne.

We cannot expect of Madame De Sévigné the horror and resentment at such proposals which would actuate a virtuous woman of our own age, and a knowledge of the times forbids censure that she received into the closest intimacy of friendship the men who had striven to rob her of her virtue, and degrade her to the prevalent dissoluteness of court and society. *Liaisons* of this nature were as common to that epoch as are engagement and marriage to-day; and though innately virtuous, and incapable of donning the vile garments of corruption, yet she could not wholly escape the influences of the day; and, doubtless, her forgiving nature allowed much to the crest-fallen men whom the proverbial recklessness of her sex licensed to attack suspiciously her own purity. At all events, her firm yet kindly course won for her the everlasting esteem and veneration of the most dissolute of that dissolute court. One and all accord to her, in their letters, tributes most complimentary to her virtues; and even Bussy, rendered at

one time by pique the worst foe of all, pays, on her death, a most touching memorial to his fair cousin's fame.

The epistolary productions of Marie De Sévigné, from which alone we derive our notions of her marvelous grace, descriptive power, and profundity of thought, were voluminous; mostly written to her idolized daughter, who early in life became the wife of the Comte De Grignan, and removed from Paris to her husband's estates in Provence. The extravagance of her grief at this separation is painfully apparent in all their subsequent correspondence; her love for her daughter was a passion—the sole passion of her life. All her letters were variations from this one sentence: "To read your letters and write to you is the great affair of my life; everything makes way for this commerce; and loving you as I love you, makes all other things trifling." These letters to Madame De Grignan were written more in the strain of a lover to his mistress, than a parent to a child. This wonderful maternal rapture was the wonder of court and society. Said M. De Pomponne: "You are a pretty heathen; you have made your daughter that idol which your heart worships." But if extravagant, it was the extravagance of a pure and loving nature, that was satisfied to lavish its wealth of tenderness in a sacred and legitimate way.

Through the medium of these admirable epistles, we are furnished with a vivid, slightly satirical, yet just portrayal of the follies of the day. She pictures, fearlessly and unconstrainedly, her impressions, both collectively and individually; yet her pen is kind and tolerant, and she refrains invariably from fulsome backbiting. She tempers sarcasm with justice; an essential frequently forgotten by writers of that stamp.

The times of Madame De Sévigné ran parallel to the days of James I. and his favorite Buckingham; to the proposed Spanish match; to the unfortunate connection of Charles I. with France; the visits of Mary De Medicis to her daughter in England; Henrietta Maria's return to France after the tragical end of her husband; the usurpation of Cromwell; the Restoration; and, finally, the expulsion of James II., and the reign of Queen Anne, whose death preceded that of Louis XIV.

She was reputed an "exquisite observer;" and the stirring events

of the epoch during which she lived and wrote, afforded ample material, which her skillful pen was not slow to interpret.

The letters of Madame De Sévigné are rich in thoughts worthy La Rochefoucauld or La Bruyere. For instance :

"One loves so much to talk of self, that one never tires of a tête-à-tête with a lover for years. That is the reason that a *dévote* likes to be with her confessor. It is for the pleasure of talking of one's self, even though speaking evil."

"I think that the value of all pleasures or blessings depends upon the state of our minds when we receive them."

Sir James Mackintosh writes of her : "The great charm of her character seems to be a *natural* virtue. In what she does, as well as in what she says, she is unforced and unstudied ; nobody, I think, had so much morality without constraint, and played so much with amiable failings without falling into vice."

And again, of her letters : "I can scarcely bring myself to think of her as being a writer, or having a style ; she has become a celebrated, probably an immortal, writer, without expecting it. She is the only classical writer who never conceived the possibility of acquiring fame. Without a great power of style she could not have communicated these feelings to others. Her talent seems mainly to consist in the power of working bold metaphors and unexpected turns of expression out of the most familiar part of conversational language."

To Horace Walpole Marie De Sévigné was an idol ; and it was his admiration of her epistolary productions that first determined him, according to a biographer, to rescue the English from the obloquy of not knowing how to write letters. He compares her with Du Deffaud, as does Mackintosh with De Staël.

One remarkable peculiarity of De Sévigné's character was her exemption from those fashionable *furors* so prevalent at the court of Versailles. At the time bigotry became the mode, De Maintenon and the Jesuits exercised absolute power, and each lady of rank secured a religious director, or confessor. Marie De Sévigné openly asserted herself an exception to the general rule, and without throwing ridicule on the piety of the true worshipers, describes with much gayety the extravagant conduct of the *dévotés* of

1674. "Her character," writes one, "was no less extraordinary than her genius."

The religious views of Madame De Sévigné were believed to lean to Protestantism. She was also judged to be a fatalist. This one quotation from her letters destroys the unjust accusation :

"I follow the ordinary paths of human prudence, thinking that in so doing we are fulfilling the orders of Providence."

Her admiration of the writings of Port-Royal, and her intimacy with the Arnauld family, caused her to be regarded as Jansenistic in principle. Her letters fully disprove these suspicions. Madame De Sévigné gives her creed in these words : "Want of reason offends me ; want of faith hurts me."

Her horror of death found vent in numerous morbid reflections as she advanced in years. In middle age she writes to Madame De Grignan :

"For my part, I see the way time flies with horror, bringing in its train dreadful old age, infirmities, and last of all, death."

Madame De La Fayette once said to her with sad, but expressive kindness, "You are old now." Her reflections on these words, followed by sentiments of resignation, the more striking because doubtless so difficult to entertain, are worthy quotation. She writes :

"I often reflect that the conditions of life are hard. We are drawn on against our will to the point where old age must be borne with. I should wish not to go any further ; not to advance in the high road of infirmity, sorrow, loss of memory, and disfigurement, that must shortly overwhelm me. But I hear a voice say, 'You *must* go on, step by step, or—you must die ;' an extremity at which Nature recoils. Such is our inevitable lot ; but a return to the will of God, to that universal law to which we are all subject, puts reason in its place, and gives us patience. Pray to God, my daughter, that He may make me draw the conclusion that Christianity inculcates to us all."

Marie De Sévigné possessed a strong love for the works of nature ; a rare and uncommon sentiment among the ladies of Louis XIV.'s court. She confesses that her happiest hours were passed with the birds in her woods at Les Rochers ; her enthusiasm in this respect was simple and childlike. Her most charming letters were written from Brittany, in the sum-

mer of 1671. She writes from Vichy, whither she had gone to "get rid of her rheumatism," of certain persons who came to Vichy to "get rid of their *ennui*" :

"At last I am going to be alone, and I am very much delighted at it. Provided they don't carry the country off with them, the river, the hundreds of little woods and torrents, the fields and the peasants that dance therein, I consent to bid adieu to all the rest. The country alone will cure me."

Marie De Sévigné died of the malignant small-pox, at the Château de Grignan, at the age of sixty-nine years ; a victim to that disfigurement of which she had so openly expressed her dread. Her remains were interred in the Collegiate Church at Grignan, and it has been asserted that she was arrayed after the fashion of interment that prevailed in the South of France ; a practice which she so detested and declaimed against, that it seems almost a presentiment of what was to happen to herself.

So closed the life of a true and noble woman—a devoted wife and mother ; a woman, with a moral, refined nature, worthy to develop in a better and more advanced epoch of time ; a woman who would have been extraordinary in any age, but who was more especially remarkable in the contrast she presented to the glaring corruptions in the midst of which she lived and died.

## THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

BY FRANCES LEE.



MY father was a ship-chandler and I was his only son. He had a flourishing business near one of the largest wharves in the city, and lived in a comfortable old-fashioned mansion back on the hill with his widowed sister and her two daughters.

I have sometimes thought that if my mother had lived it might have been different ; but somehow I never felt myself at home in my father's house. I came and went, and had my meals and my clothes, it is true, but I always felt a little in the way when I was there, and not at all missed when I was gone.

I suppose my father might have

given me a place in his business, but I fancy he thought it better for everybody to work out his own fortune as he had done. Anyhow he was a man of few words ; and when, at the age of sixteen, I had finished my education, he said nothing to me about my future, so I began to look around for myself.

My father's office being down among the wharves, I naturally looked first among the ships, and thinking anything was better than nothing, directly I found a place.

"Father," said I, one morning at breakfast, "I have shipped as a cabin boy on a whaler bound for the Provinces."

"Have you, my son," he replied, passing his cup for coffee, "how soon does she sail?"

"Next Friday," I answered.

"So soon? You'd better call at Martin's and get your outfit ready-made, then," said he, helping himself to sugar.

"Jane," said my Aunt Mary Ann, "you may make your cousin a husband to take with him, and remember to stock it well."

"Yes, mamma," replied Jane.

"Susan," continued my aunt, "you may put up for your cousin a box of your nice cucumber salve. It is most excellent for chaps and bruises."

"Yes, mamma," replied Susan.

As for my Aunt Mary Ann, she presented me with two pairs of knitted socks and a woolen tip-peg ; while from my father I had a five-pound note and a chronometer.

And that was all there was about my leaving home. Perhaps my father had some hidden tenderness for me, but he had always seemed simply indifferent, and so I had learned to be toward him and toward my home. Thus, I went on my way without a regret on the part of anybody, and took all the rough usage and hard fare that fall to the lot of a cabin boy.

I meant to succeed in my duties, and so I did, and gradually worked my way up through all the lower grades one by one, till at last I was quarter-master on a merchantman bound to the States. In this time I had visited all the principal ports in the world, and had served on every manner of craft from a fishing smack to a man-of-war. I had gone with emigrants to Australia and New Zealand, and with coolies from China. I had gone with guano from South America to Holland, with bananas and oranges from Cuba, and with ice from Canada.