

**From the Garden Snake to the Toad
Madame Palatine on the Ministers of the Grand Siècle**

by
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Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchesse d'Orléans, was fondly known in Germany as Liselotte von der Pfalz, and in France as *Madame*, for such was the title given to the wife of the King's brother, who was known as *Monsieur*. In 1670, when the 19-year-old Liselotte was married to the only brother of Louis XIV, Monsieur, Duke Philippe d'Orléans, was a 31-year-old widower. His marriage to Henrietta of England, rumored to have died through poison, had been a notorious disaster, since (among other problems), Monsieur was more interested in beautiful boys than in women. But for Elisabeth Charlotte's father, a German prince-electoral whose land lay close to powerful and aggressive France, a family alliance with the French royal house looked like a possibility of protecting his land, and perhaps even to play the role of mediator between the Holy Roman Empire and France. That is why Liselotte was made to convert to Catholicism and married to Monsieur—"as a political lamb," and "against her will and desire, out of pure filial obedience." Inconsolable to her dying day that her sacrifice had been in vain—for it was precisely because of the "Orléans war" over her presumptive inheritance that her homeland, the "dear Palatinate," was exposed to the most dreadful devastation—she suffered for fifty years from never-abating homesickness. Her "greatest occupation" as she put it, was letter-writing (she wrote about forty a week for fifty years!) and her greatest consolation was her cultural dowry, which she lovingly preserved and cultivated as a secret treasure that seemed vastly more important to her than the possession of wealth, power, or beauty.

An observer of her first steps in France, the famous gossip-monger and letter writer Madame de

Séigné, reported with astonishment that the young Madame "is not at all embarrassed by the grandeur of her new rank." And why, Liselotte would have asked, should she be embarrassed? After all, she came from a very long line of sovereign princes; after all, her grandparents had been King and Queen of Bohemia (albeit only for the duration of one winter); after all, she was a direct descendant of the House of Stuart—in short, she was pridefully conscious that her ancestors had by no means been "gypsies in a green wagon" to cite a famous line from Thomas Mann. Pride of family and a veritable mystique of pure blood were important parts of the cultural dowry that enabled Elisabeth Charlotte to rise above many a humiliation and frustration. On the strength of such self-confidence, Elisabeth Charlotte was astute enough, soon after her arrival in France, to recognize the true character of the dazzling display of splendor at the court of the Sun King. "Not all that glitters here is gold," she wrote. The little princess from Germany recognized even then what today's historians have found out through diligent research, namely that the flourishing of the arts was a vital ingredient of Louis XIV's *politique de grandeur*, a means of showing the power and glory of France to the world. The French court could afford a Mansard, a Le Nôtre, a Mignard, a Lully, a Molière, and hundreds of other artists; but most of the high aristocrats who lived there preferred gambling and hunting. Intellectual interests usually went no further than to questions of Catholic dogma; and this was practically a matter of politics. It was considered rather odd that Elisabeth Charlotte liked to receive learned people in order to "reason" with them.

"At home" this had been different. And so, in addition to pride in her unimpeachable lineage, Elisabeth Charlotte began to develop a certain cultural superiority. Her father, Elector Karl Ludwig von der Pfalz had been poor, but his daughter knew that he had used a considerable part of his scant resources to bring renowned and controversial scholars to Heidelberg, to strengthen the University, and to rebuild its famous old library.

Elisabeth Charlotte, who "adored" her father, adopted many of his attitudes. In the course of time she became a bit of a misfit at the French court, for she was not beautiful, she was not good at spinning intrigues—but not devout either—and above all she was entirely too outspoken, both in what she said and what she wrote. How often did she write: "I would have choked if I hadn't said this," or "that's how I felt about it, and so I told him." Little wonder, then, that Madame's social life became less and less lively, a fact that to some extent she welcomed, for it gave her leisure to turn to other pursuits, first and foremost her correspondence, but also her collections of engravings, medals, "engraved stones" (that is, cameos and intaglios) and books.

Nonetheless, the king's sister-in-law was required to perform her ceremonial role at court. This is what she called her "métier of being Madame." She therefore knew many among the cast of thousands that daily celebrated the monarchy of Louis XIV on the great stage that was Versailles. She often met and spoke to the ministers of the reign of Louis XIV and of the regency on ceremonial occasions and, as we shall see, had business with some of them. She also knew about them, for in her library she had the *Etat de la France*, the official reference work that indicated who held what position and listed the personnel and competencies of the various ministries. Also among her books I found a volume entitled: *Les Ministres* and another one, *Parallèle de Mazarin et de Richelieu*. In addition, her library contained a great many books on recent and contemporary history—and we know that Madame was a great reader. (There is no space to document this here: the reader will just have to take my word for it.) Who, then, were these ministers, and how did Madame view them?

Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's great finance minister, she did not know very well. When he died, she repeated to her aunt some of the sayings that made the rounds of Paris:

Your Grace knows, I believe, that the coat-of-arms of the deceased is a garden snake, that of the chancellor three lizards, and also that the name of the man who is now in Colbert's place is Peletier [Skinner]. That is why they say, "the lizard has swallowed the garden snake and has sent his skin to the skinner to be fixed" (B.I, 60, 29 Sept. 1683).¹

Pretty tame stuff, this, but in her first ten years at court, Elisabeth Charlotte was too young (only 19 when she arrived) and too wrapped up in her own concerns (royal favor at first, then children, followed by increasing marital troubles, the heart-breaking devastation of her homeland, and finally her fall from favor) to be very interested in the king's ministers, with the exception of Louvois, minister of war.

Long after Colbert's death, she made a much more interesting reference to him. This occurs in a context of strong feelings, for it deals with religious persecution, which Madame abhorred on principle, and with particular vehemence when the victims were her former correlegionists. Her words imply that Colbert was indeed a good minister, but that his successors, from sheer bigotry and aggressiveness, have subverted a beneficial policy:

The poor Reformed [i.e. Calvinists] are to be pitied...Those who have settled in Germany will spread the use of the French language. Monsieur Colbert is supposed to have said that many subjects constitute the wealth of kings and Princes and therefore wanted to make everyone marry and have children: so now these new subjects will become the German electors' and princes' wealth. (1688, F.115)

There is a certain amount of *Schadenfreude* here, it seems to me. One minister about whom Elisabeth Charlotte told stories even though she did not know him at all was Hugues de Lionne, who died in 1671,

the year of her arrival in France. She used him as an example for her conviction that the historical record was often manipulated. "Histories are lies too," she says somewhere; considering what we now know about the matter of political propaganda in seventeenth-century France, this is a rather shrewd insight, even though her own interpretations often reflect literary and psychological experience more than knowledge of hard political facts. Indeed, one wonders whether she did not deliberately make herself look much more naive than she really was in order to pull the wool over the censor's eyes. Consider this statement:

It turns out that more romantic things go on than we are told in history books, for in history books they always give political reasons for what goes on, even though in fact the merest trifles are often the cause of great events, as for instance: the first Dutch War is described in the history books as if the King had started it from ambition, or as they say here, *soif de gloire*, yet I know that this same war had no other cause than that Prince Wilhelm, who now is Cardinal Fürstenberg, was sleeping with Monsieur de Lionne's wife, and that Lionne was mad at him and went after him in all kinds of ways, which eventually led to the war. (7 April 1701, B.I 447).

Surely, Madame knew better than that!

Colbert de Croissy, foreign minister in the 1680s and son of the great finance minister, was not one of Madame's favorites: he had been instrumental in thwarting one of her dearest pipe dreams, the marriage of her cousin and godchild, Sophie-Charlotte of Braunschweig, to the French Dauphin. He had also been a party to a rather humiliating experience, when Louis XIV asked her to write a letter to her uncle the Duke of Braunschweig, pressuring him to give favorable consideration to a certain matter without telling her what this matter was. And above all, Colbert de Croissy was foreign minister when the

"horrendous and piteous calamity [the French invasion] was visited on the poor Palatinate" (F.61). So when Madame was trying (in vain, alas) to help her native town of Heidelberg to obtain concessions from the occupying French troops in 1688, she told the emissary from Heidelberg not to bother presenting his petition to Croissy, since that would not do any good "*weil er ein ochz sey.*"² We would probably translate this as "because he is a blockhead," but Madame did use an animal metaphor (ox) to convey the judgment of the minister's stubborn stupidity.

François Michel Le Tellier, Marquis de Louvois, minister of war, was the target of very strong feelings on the part of Madame. At the time of his death, she did not yet feel free, and perhaps had not yet learned, the techniques needed to express her loathing of the man who was responsible for the devastation of her beloved homeland. So she simply told a gossipy story of how the waters of Forges had not agreed with Louvois, for he had died, almost dropping dead in her room, "which would have been an awful spectacle." She also reported that the King did not seem upset at this death; speculated on the rumors of a poisoning (his sons, Barbézieux and Courtenvaux, are bad fellows, she said, but they wouldn't do that); and she even wistfully remarked that she wished an old trollop (Mme de Maintenon, of course), rather than Louvois had "bitten the dust." But she kept all of these memories firmly in her mind and unpacked when she was in her late sixties. Here are just a few samples:

"Mr. de Louvois had a very evil character; he hated his father and his brother [the Le Telliers], and they were my good friends, so I had to carry their iniquity..." (He. 397)

"Louvois served the King well, but he also was a dreadful, wicked man. He did believe in the devil, but not in our Lord God. He believed all deviners, but he never minded going in for burning and scorching, poisoning, lying, and cheating." (He. 397)

"Louvois was an intelligent, clever man, but more wicked than the devil himself, and he hated me very much." (He. 398)

And finally, a passage of vintage Liselotte:

"I shudder with horror at the thought of all the burning ordered by Monsieur Louvois. I believe that he is now doing some burning of his own in the other world, for he died so suddenly that there was no time for the slightest contrition. He was poisoned by his own doctor, who was later poisoned in his turn; but before he died the latter confessed everything and told who had made him do the deed. But then it was put out that the doctor had ranted in a fit of fever, because he had accused the old trollop; yet the details were such that there could be no doubt about it. In this man was fulfilled the word of the Scripture: "The measure you give will be the measure you get." (To Louise, 3 Nov. 1718, F. 218.)

The old trollop, of course, is Madame de Maintenon, the King's undeclared spouse, in reality a self-made woman of considerable intelligence, subtlety, and self-control. The passage above reveals one of Liselotte's great obsessions: whatever went wrong in her life, the life of all those who were dear to her, or indeed the life of the French nation, was the fault of The Lady. In her later years Madame enjoyed citing bonsmots that had circulated during the heyday of Madame de Maintenon, the one for example of the lady who, at the sight of two youthful ministers, Torcy and Seignelay, said, "J'ai vu à la cour ce que je n'aurois jamais cru voir, c'est l'amour au tombeau et le ministre au berceau." (He. 11) At the time when she was trying to make sense of the intricacies of the court of the Sun King, Elisabeth Charlotte periodically assessed the ministers in letters to her aunt, usually in those that were hand-delivered, not sent through the public mails. They were rarely complimentary. As early as 1686, we

hear that "all the ministers flatter the woman and seek to gain her favor through every kind of base behavior" (F.53). Here is one written in March, 1698:

"The ministers here are peculiar, too. Pomponne just prattles on (*radottirt*); Barbessieux drinks himself out of his mind and thinks of nothing but debauch; Torcy is jealous of his father-in-law [Pomponne], if that one says yes, he says no; Monsieur de Pontchartrain is a very nice and honorable little man, the most refined and best of all the ministers. Barbessieux is enamored of the tall Princesse de Conti, they say that she puts up with him more from avarice, because she hopes that he will give her a lot, than from love" (B.I, 328).

By 1700, Madame was even more ill-tempered.

I should also say a word about the ministers. One could not see a more arrogant, or impertinent, or brutal fellow than Barbessieux; he has all of his father's [Louvois] bad qualities, and none of the good; Torcy is even more insufferable, he is just as conceited as the other, but is stupid and impertinent; the chancellor [Pontchartrain] is a good, honorable man, and the controleur general mons. de Chamillart as well, these two are praiseworthy, not at all impertinent but most polite, and they know how to live. (B.I, 410)

Monsieur de Chamillart—who eventually became minister of war—could do no wrong, and Madame was modest in her requests for services from him. When she complained to him that the customs-officers had guzzled down a hundred bottles of the Neckar wine that had been sent to her, perhaps because they were thirsty from gobbling up all her German sausages, "he gave orders to let them have a proper scolding;" this, she hopes, will take care of the problem (B.II, 248). In 1709, when Chamillart was relieved of his functions, she loyally defended him, especially since his successor,

Voysin, was a protégé of—who else?—Mme de Maintenon (H.107, 109-10).

One of the outstanding *bêtes noires* to appear in Elisabeth Charlotte's correspondence was Colbert de Croissy's son, Marquis de Torcy who—like Louvois before him, incidentally—was *surintendant des postes* for many years. Now for Elisabeth Charlotte, *les postes* were the lifeline without which she would have perished from homesickness, lack of recognition as a skillful writer in her native language, lack of communication with people who shared her cultural heritage, indeed, lack of intimacy, friendship, and love. Yet her mail was tampered with from the day she arrived in France to the day she died. Madame knew very well that this was a policy, and she often indicated that in principle she did not mind, since she did not know any State secrets that she might betray; it was just that it held up the mail, and that was enough to make her furious, especially if she expected important news from Germany. A few words about the reading of her mail by the various foreign ministers are in order here: Madame may not have known any State secrets in the narrow sense of the word, but the French government, or Louis XIV himself for that matter, could not have been too pleased to have it bruited about that life at the court of Versailles was a bore; that "wicked priests and old women" were running everything, that "poor King James," whose right to the English crown Louis XIV supported at great cost, was really a very stupid man and much less qualified than the *de facto* king, William of Orange; that the king's son was a boorish oaf; or that during the War of the Austrian Succession the royal treasury was empty, morale low, and people were starving in the streets. But Liselotte thought that her letters were completely innocent because she often checked herself: "But hush, I mustn't go too far in this text, lest I get into big trouble," she might say.

And so her fury was vented on the ministers, especially Torcy, that "cunning and nose-y gentleman,

who has my letters *entrer dans les affaires d'estat sans les ordres du Roy.*"

I wish [she continues] I had a chance to confront the little minister with the perpetual grin on his face; I am certain he would not wish to face me with his false interpretations. Will the gentleman who translates from the German please translate this carefully, so that the minister knows exactly how I feel... I do not know why that little man is so keen to hurt me; I have never done him any harm and should think that, given the important matters of State at hand, he should have better things to do than to puzzle over my letters to my closest kin (6 July 1702, F.146).

On another occasion she also takes a sideswipe at "Monsieur de Torcy's slow translator" (B.538). She liked to embroider this theme of the unimportance of her letters in the satirical mode, often using scatological motifs. Her famous letter on farting, for instance, ends with the words:

...and if anyone should be curious enough to break open my letters, I offer this incense as a New Year's present to the first person who might open this letter before Your Grace (1 Jan. 1693, F.80).

There are other references to the "confounded" Torcy, who "steals" her letters, who "hates her dreadfully," is "nosey," and "enjoys tormenting people." The image of the little toad (*krötgen*) occurs in the context of great personal anguish, when Elisabeth Charlotte is frantic with fear that her beloved aunt in Germany has fallen ill following the loss of her daughter:

It is a shame what they are doing to the mail. In Monsieur de Louvois's day the letters were read just as they are now, but at least they were punctually delivered. But now since that little toad, Torcy [N.B. not "Monsieur de Torcy,"

which is rare] is in charge, one has to fret and worry terribly about the mail, and yet I have never been more impatient to receive news from Hanover... (9 Feb. 1705, F, 157).

Much later, when Madame had become a truly formidable old lady, when she had learned from the satirical writers of the European tradition, and when she was finally secure in her position as mother of the Regent, vigorous attacks on such people as Torcy, one feels, were not so much a matter of expressing personal anguish and frustration as of enjoying hyperbole and rhetoric.

I do not know what pleasure it affords Monsieur de Torcy [N.B.] to regulate the mail so badly, for Abbé Dubois [another of her *bêtes noires*] has let me know that he has nothing to do with the mails and that they are strictly the Marquis de Torcy's responsibility. But that is to call them stinking eggs and rotten butter [instead of rotten eggs and stinking butter, as one of her favorite German sayings had it], for one is as bad as the other, and we would be better off if they were on the gallows rather than at this court, and the devil knows that they are a pair of gallows birds and falser than gallows-wood, as Lenor always says. If he is curious enough to read this letter, he will find his praises in it, according to the German proverb: "Eavesdroppers hear no good of themselves." (19 June 1721, F, 266.)

We must understand, of course, that Madame's views of Louis XIV's ministers—along with most of her writing—will not necessarily be factually accurate. She was not, after all, a political analyst or a historian, but a satirical writer interested in spinning a good story and passing on to her "public"—for she had a small public in Germany, and she knew it—striking characterizations of persons who moved on the great stage that was Versailles. As a player on that stage herself, moreover, she had intensely personal bones to

pick with almost all of the ministers; and the more personal her feelings, the more outrageous became her language and imagery. Her cultural heritage caused Elisabeth Charlotte to see the aggressive policies of the Ludovican State in a most critical light. As a member of the French royal family and as an admirer of Louis XIV, her disapproval of many of the things that were done placed her in an awkward position, because she felt, quite sincerely, that "*hohe häupter*" (exalted rulers) should not be made fun of (B. II, 321). By and large, she stuck to this resolution, although she could not always resist in the case of James II, with his stutter, his bigotry, and his foolish cheerfulness (but then, he was not really a ruler, and not all that exalted either). Louis XIV pursued many policies of which she did not approve, but he was the Master.

Fortunately, Elisabeth Charlotte was educated enough to fall back on a favorite theme in the absolutist discourse, which maintained that if monarchs act immorally, stupidly, or neglectfully, it is because they have been led astray by bad ministers and advisers: she could always blame the King's ministers.

This she did with all the verve, skill, and unfairness she could muster; and what she could muster was considerable, for she was a satirist of the first order. When I realized this, I went to check up on the modern theories of what makes a satirist, and sure enough, Elisabeth Charlotte fit all the criteria: "Satire... caricature, lampoon, parody, paradox, epigram, pasquinade.. all serve the twofold ends of mockery and reproof." Some critics see the main feature of satire in the "playfully critical distortion of the familiar," pointing out that satirists often use animal imagery to castigate humans. All make the point that the satirist is motivated by moral indignation at the way humankind has gone astray. I was startled, incidentally, to discover that with the exception of one brief reference to Jane Austen, the writings I consulted do not mention any women satirists; indeed one author said that women's lot has traditionally been so

miserable that they were unable to muster the detachment needed for good satire.

Well, Liselotte was very miserable much of her life, yet she also had the ego-strength to strike out against institutions and people whom she held responsible for her misery, and indeed for the misery of the world in general. What is more, she trained herself in the satirical genre, for her library (whose inventory was made after her death) contained the works of all the great satirists of the western tradition, from Martial, Juvenal, Horace, and Petronius to the *Satire Menippé*, Rabelais, Regnier, Boileau, Benserade, and Fontenelle.

In writing about the ministers (and in other contexts as well), Elisabeth Charlotte often protested that she knew nothing about politics. This, I am convinced, she did for the benefit of the censor and secondarily as a matter of *bienséance* (in public) for a woman and a princess. Thus she wrote to an old nobleman in Germany, "[I]...firmly believe that [ruling the kingdom] is not women's business," (Harling, p. 131); and to Leibniz,

"if science is indeed the heavenly manna, there must be many hungry souls. In fact I fear that if this were the case I would go hungry myself, for no one could be less learned and more ignorant than I am..." (F. 203).

When her son had become regent of France, she made a more personal point:

What is really happening I do not know, for I am extremely concerned that it might be thought that my son is ruled by women and therefore, in order to set an example to his wife and his daughters, I have announced loudly that I will not meddle in any of his affairs (F.205).

Also, quite revealing, she wrote about her good friend the *maréchale de Clerambault*: "She was a lady of great intelligence and memory and very learned, but she

never let on, one never heard anything learned from her, unless one asked her. (H.157, 486).

But can we really believe these protestations? Elisabeth Charlotte's earlier life experiences and family history would indicate otherwise: during the Thirty Years' War her family had suffered exile, loss of territory, and loss of international prestige, and some of its members—especially the women—subsequently became involved in the irenicist movement (the peace-activism of the time). In Elisabeth Charlotte this attitude first expressed itself on a purely personal level; when she came to the court of the Sun King, she was given the nickname of "*soeur pacifique*," because she always tried to mediate in the petty and not so petty disputes of her household.

In the course of time, however, she began to act as a discreet mediator in this movement, establishing the contact between her first almoner, the abbé de Saint Pierre, who was "drawing up entire projects for making eternal peace" even though "people made fun of him because of it" (1710; B.II, 279) and Leibniz, who was very active in the peace movement in Germany. She also bought Leibniz' works for her son and later encouraged Leibniz to call on her son the Regent, assuring the German philosopher that "his reputation is very high in Paris."

Her correspondence contains many passages indicating that she did have political views; they are often prefaced by a statement like this one of 1701 (H.88, 225): "If I were elector, which, to tell the truth, would have been more suitable to me than being Madame..." It is quite clear that for the most part Madame did not approve of the aggressive policies of the government of Louis XIV: she was, to be sure, a believer in the absolutist State, in the God-given hierarchy of society in which the monarch was placed by God at the head of his people, but she also had a strong sense of the monarch's obligation to rule justly and wisely, like a father. Ministers, she felt, often

misled monarchs. "I believe," she wrote à propos of a minister of the king of Prussia,

"that it is one of the greatest sins in the world to oppress the people; it can never bring good luck not to tell the king about the state of his affairs, and thereby cause everything to go helter-skelter... (19 March 1711, B.II, 267)

In letters that were sent through the public mails she sometimes criticized what she considered unjust behavior in kings other than Louis XIV:

How dreadful that they are sending people so quickly to spando [Spandau; read Bastille?] without finding out if their case is good or bad, and then forget them. I thought that the King of Prussia was so pious; now it seems to me that the greatest piety of kings should consist in practicing justice. Praying and bawling [hymns] is good for priests and monks, but this must not be the piety of kings; that should be justice and ruling their country well and not wronging anyone; this is what I call royal piety. (29 Jan. 1711, B.I, 265)

Despite the broad reference to "praying and bawling hymns," this and many similar passages reveal that Madame was sympathetic to the reform-minded circles around Fénelon, even though she considered the mysticism of Madame Guyon perfectly ridiculous. But she liked "Monsieur de Cambray," especially after he had been dropped by Madame de Maintenon:

He always seemed to me to be a most honest and upright man; he is agreeable to talk to, but not in his person, for he is only skin drawn over bones. I am sorry that his ambition has cast him into misfortune in this manner, for he used to be a most virtuous gentleman... It is the old trollop who has brought him this misfortune... (B. I, 431)

She had read *Télmaque* in manuscript and called it "a very well written and beautiful book."

God grant that the instructions given in this book will make their impression on the Duc de Bourgogne, for if he follows them he will become a great king when the time comes.
(F. 112)

As a good irenicist, however, she also read Bossuet's writings on Quietism, spoke to him about it, and found that "Monsieur de Meaux" also made some good points.

In addition to indicating her likes and dislikes, Madame sometimes did comment on concrete political matters: when James II and William of Orange both claimed the throne of England, for example, she privately imagined and communicated to her beloved aunt some rather good compromises (e.g. B.II 137) that would, in her opinion, have solved the problem. If she was so uninterested in affairs of State, why would she be able to send a (printed, to be sure) preliminary peace proposal to Germany in 1709? And why would she have political songs to pass on to her aunt? She claimed that these "just arrived in the mail"—she had no idea who might have sent them! At one point, she even reported an elaborate peace-plan for all of Europe that she had worked out during a night of insomnia (B. II, 132; May 1706), but of course her opinion was not asked; indeed she was not really supposed to write about such things.

Perhaps I should have given this paper an epigraph, taken from one of Madame's letters (1718, H. 122, 427): "Ministers are no good anywhere." I believe that this has to do with her conception of kingship, aristocracy, and government which, shaped by her Germanic background, was for the most part completely out of tune with the "modern" monarchy as it functioned in France at the time of the Sun King. In her opinion, Louis XIV chose his ministers on the basis of talent and personal loyalty; they were lavishly rewarded technicians and courtiers rather than

aristocrats with the proper quarterings who helped the monarch govern as a matter of duty. Historians today contest this view of the selection of ministers, but this is how Elisabeth Charlotte saw it in her day. Her ideal of the monarchical State was given more coherent literary form by Fénelon and Saint Simon; here again Madame was on the fringes of a movement for political reform—within the confines of monarchy, to be sure, even absolute monarchy. She approved of her son's regency for more than personal reasons; for it established a council of the highest aristocracy and then set out to mend French society after the wild spree of military aggression, high taxes, and sumptuary spending of the reign of the Sun King. Fully aware of her son's personal shortcomings, Elisabeth Charlotte worried about the health of his body and his soul, but she was proud of his intellectual openness, his religious tolerance, and his success in keeping the peace. Relations between Madame and her son had sometimes been stormy; but the Regent respected his mother and came to "laugh and chat" with her. I for one like to think that her ideals, both aristocratic and humane, left their mark on him.

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Notes

¹References to quotations:

F. followed by page number = *A Woman's Life in the Court of the Sun King: Letters of Liselotte von der Pfalz, Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchesse d'Orléans*, translated and introduced by Elborg Forster (Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

H. followed by volume number and page number = Wilhelm Ludwig Holland, ed., *Briefe der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans*, Bibliothek des literarischen Vereins Stuttgart, vols. 88, 107, 122, 132, 144, 157 (Tübingen, 1867-81).

B. followed by a Roman volume number and an Arabic page number = Eduard Bodemann, ed., *Aus den Briefen der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans an die Kurfürstin Sophie von Hannover. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* 2 vols. (Hannover 1891).

He. followed by page number = Hans F. Helmolt, ed. *Elisabeth Charlottens Briefe an Karoline von Wales und Anton-Ulrich von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel* (Annaberg in Sachsen: Grasers Verlag, 1909).

²Cited in Robert Salzer, "Zur Geschichte Heidelbergs in den Jahren 1688 und 1689", Beigabe zum *Jahresbericht der höheren Bürgerschule zu Heidelberg für 1878*. (Heidelberg, 1878)