

This establishment, which was a sort of monastery, acquired a high reputation from having served for a time as a retreat and residence of the great Pascal. His name threw a kind of celebrity over the whole community, which does not seem to be sustained by any of their published works. The Arnauds kept up the controversy, which he had commenced in his famous *Provincials* between the Molinists and the Jansenists,—the loose and strict moralists of the Catholic Church; but being no longer vivified by his genius, it degenerated into a *caput mortuum* of bitter and angry pamphlets, which were never much read, and are now forgotten. From her great partiality for the Arnauds, and personal intimacy with them, Madame de Sévigné has sometimes been called a Jansenist; and it is not improbable that the worldly fortunes of her family, which were not very brilliant, were injured by this connection; for the Jesuits were all-powerful at Court during the whole period of Louis XIV. But even on this subject she exhibits her usual good sense and good taste, and, with all her admiration of the Arnauds and of Port-Royal, never meddles in her letters with the Jansenist controversy, but, on the contrary, speaks of it, whenever she alludes to it, in a tone of pleasantry as a matter in which she felt no interest.

We must now take leave of Madame de Sévigné, having, we trust, said enough to recommend her to the attention of such of our fair readers as were not before particularly acquainted with her merits. We cannot but notice in conclusion,—if we may venture to tack a trite moral to a tedious tale,—the strong impression that remains upon the mind after a glance at the period of Louis XIV., of the prodigious superiority of literary talent over every other exercise of intellect, as a means of conferring permanent distinction on its possessors and all with whom they are connected. The age of Louis XIV. is universally considered as one of the brightest periods in the history of civilization. What gave it this splendid preeminence? Louis XIV. himself, although as Madame de Sévigné justly remarks, he possessed great qualities and eclipsed the glory of most of his predecessors, now comes in for a very moderate share of the attention we bestow on the time in which he lived. His generals, Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, and the rest,—unquestionably men of distinguished talent,—were yet in no way superior to the thunderbolts of war that have wasted mankind from age to age and are now forgotten. His ministers, Fouquet, Colbert, Louvois, have left

no marked traces in history. The celebrated beauties that charmed all eyes at the Court festivals, have long since mouldered into dust. Yet we still cling with the deepest interest to the memory of the age of Louis XIV. because it was the age of Pascal and Corneille, of Racine, Molière and La Fontaine, of Bossuet, Fenelon, Bourdaloue, Massillon, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucault, and Madame de Sévigné. The time will probably come, in the progress of civilization, when the military and civic glories of this period will be still more lightly, because more correctly estimated, than they are now. When the King, who could make war upon Holland, because he was offended by the device of a burgomaster's seal, and the general who burnt the Palatinate in cold blood, will be looked upon,—with all their refinement and merit of a certain kind,—as belonging essentially to the same class of semi-barbarians with the Tamerlanes and Attilas, the Rolands and the Red Jackets:—when the Fouquets and Colberts will be considered as possessing a moral value very little higher than that of the squirrels and snakes which they not inappropriately assumed as their emblems. But the maxims of La Rochefoucault will never lose their point, nor the poetry of Racine its charm. The graceful eloquence of Fenelon will flow forever through the pages of Telemachus, and the latest posterity will listen with as much, or even greater pleasure than their contemporaries, to the discourses of Bossuet and Massillon. The masterly productions of these great men, and their illustrious contemporaries, will perpetuate to “the last syllable of recorded time” the celebrity which they originally conferred upon the period when they lived, and crown with a light of perennial and unfading glory the age of Louis XIV.

WOULD I COULD LEAVE!

Would I could leave, but whither shall I fly?
To roam this earth is not to fly from life!
Since then, there's no escape, dismiss the sigh,
And oh! my soul, arm bravely for the strife.
Fight against Hope, if need be, only strive
Gainst every odds with faith and heavenly trust;
God bids the bold heart live and nobly thrive,
While coward-breasts are crushed down.

“EVERY thing in life has two sides. There is nothing at what a fool may not find fault, and fall into despair, or the wise man feel satisfaction and enjoyment.”