

not like histories which attack the reputation.'"¹ As the besetting sin of the writer of this letter was the delight she took in repeating scandalous tales, she was doubtless among those to whom this admonitory check was occasionally given by the pure-minded widow of James II., who not only restrained her own lips from speaking amiss of others, but exerted a moral influence to prevent evil communications from being uttered in her presence. Mary Beatrice had suffered too severely from the practices of those who had employed the pens and tongues of political slanderers to undermine her popularity, to allow any one to be assailed in like manner; nor was she ever known to retaliate on the suborners of those who had libelled her. The eagle of Este, though smitten to the dust, could not condescend to imitate the creeping adder, "which bites the horse by the heel to make his rider fall backward:" it was not in her nature to act so mean a part. "She bore her misfortunes," continues the duchess of Orleans, "with the greatest patience, not from stupidity, for she had a great deal of mind, was lively in conversation, and could laugh and joke very pleasantly. She often praised the princess of Wales, [Caroline, consort of George II.] I loved this queen much, and her death has caused me much sorrow."

Though Mary Beatrice was now where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, hearts were found hard enough to falsify, for political purposes, the particulars of her calm and holy parting from a world that was little worthy of her. She had forgiven her enemies, her persecutors, and, those who were hardest of all to forgive, her slanderers; these, however, not only continued to bear false witness against her, but accused her of having borne false witness against herself, by pretending "that on her death-bed she had disowned her son, and adopted their calumny on his birth." The absurdity of this tale, which appeared in the Dutch gazette a few days after her death, is exposed in a contemporary letter written by a gentleman at Paris, who, after relating the particulars of her late majesty's death, which, he says, "he had from a person

¹ From the Historical Correspondence and Remains of Elizabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans: Paris, 1844.

² Ibid.