

will probably ever remain unknown."

One thing only is certain, and it is the only point on which all agree—it is that between the years 1662 and 1703 there was a prisoner of great distinction, immured at first in the Pignerol, then removed to the Island of St. Marguerite, and at last stationed in the Bastille. During this period he was always under the surveillance of the same strict gaoler, St. Mars.

Speculation has long been rife among French historians, regarding the elucidation of the mystery connected with this unfortunate man. By some it has been conjectured that he was a twin-brother of Louis XIV, thus cruelly sacrificed to make his senior safe upon the throne; others held him to be a son of Oliver Cromwell; others, the English Duke of Monmouth; many with apparently more reason, inclined to think him a state-prisoner of France, such as the Duke de Beaufort or the Count de Vermandois; a few recognize in him the noble-hearted Fouquet, Superintendent of the Finances of France in the early part of the reign of Louis XIV.

The hypothesis which seems the most satisfactory and which has received the most encouragement has also the merit of possessing a greater degree of probability than any of the others. According to this opinion the Man in the Iron Mask was Count Anthony Matthioli, Secretary of State to Charles III, Duke of Mantua, and afterwards to his son Ferdinand.

To briefly consider this hypothesis on account of its close relation to what is certain in history will be our first endeavour, and then we will expose the theory which makes The Man in the Iron Mask a twin-brother of Louis, on account of the interest and romance attached to it, as well as having furnished the ground-work of the tragedy entitled "Man in the Iron Mask," so ably presented by the students of our University Dramatic Association, during the course of last year.

When Ferdinand, Duke of Mantua, came to the throne, upon the death of his father, he found his possessions in a prosperous condition. He was naturally a profligate prince, and giving himself up to all sorts of amusements and debaucheries, he quickly laid the finances of his dominions in a low state. Matthioli, as Secretary of State, readily agreed that, under such pressing circumstances, that Ferdinand should accept a bribe from Louis XIV and give France in return, permission to place an army of occupation within his territory, with the intention of establishing French influence in Italy. Matthioli, as negotiator in the plot, set out for Paris, and there he privately interviewed the French King, who presented him with a large sum of money. When the time drew near for the carrying out of the intrigue, Matthioli placed difficulties and obstructions in the way of France, and at the same time negotiated for a larger bribe from Spain. The French ambassador was seized at Milaness and the court of France found their diplomacy betrayed and liable to exposure. This deception aroused the anger of Louis, and he resolved to take most signal vengeance upon Matthioli, in satisfaction for his wounded pride and baffled ambition. The unsuspecting Secretary was enticed into a secret interview on the frontier, and there kidnapped and carried to the French garrison at the Pignerol, and afterwards to the fortress of Exiles, when St. Mars was appointed governor of the Island of St. Marguerite. He was incarcerated in this fortress eleven years, and subsequently was removed to the Bastille in the manner we have above described, and confined therein till his death.

Facts taken from the archives of France and documentary records of an apparently conclusive character, published by Lord Dover, in 1825, show that this mysterious prisoner was Matthioli, and that he was twenty-