

The Man in the Iron Mask

Andrew Lang

Table of Contents

<u>The Man in the Iron Mask</u>	1
<u>Andrew Lang</u>	1
<u>I. THE LEGEND</u>	1
<u>II. THE VALET'S HISTORY</u>	2
<u>III. THE VALET'S MASTER</u>	10

The Man in the Iron Mask

Andrew Lang

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

- I. THE LEGEND
- II. THE VALET'S HISTORY
- III. THE VALET'S MASTER

I. THE LEGEND

The Mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask is, despite a pleasant saying of Lord Beaconsfield's, one of the most fascinating in history. By a curious coincidence the wildest legend on the subject, and the correct explanation of the problem, were offered to the world in the same year, 1801. According to this form of the legend, the Man in the Iron Mask was the genuine Louis XIV., deprived of his rights in favor of a child of Anne of Austria and of Mazarin. Immured in the Isles Sainte–Marguerite, in the bay of Cannes (where you are shown his cell, looking north to the sunny town), he married, and begot a son. That son was carried to Corsica, was named de Buona Parte, and was the ancestor of Napoleon. The Emperor was thus the legitimate representative of the House of Bourbon.

This legend was circulated in 1801, and is referred to in a proclamation of the Royalists of La Vendee. In the same year, 1801, Roux Fazaillac, a Citoyen and a revolutionary legislator, published a work in which he asserted that the Man in the Iron Mask (as known in rumor) was not one man, but a myth, in which the actual facts concerning at least two men were blended. It is certain that Roux Fazaillac was right; or that, if he was wrong, the Man in the Iron Mask was an obscure valet, of French birth, residing in England, whose real name was Martin.

Before we enter on the topic of this poor menial's tragic history, it may be as well to trace the progress of the romantic legend, as it blossomed after the death of the Man, whose Mask was not of iron, but of black velvet. Later we shall show how the legend struck root and flowered, from the moment when the poor valet, Martin (by his prison pseudonym "Eustache Dauge"), was immured in the French fortress of Pignerol, in Piedmont (August, 1669).

The Man, in connection with the Mask, is first known to us from a kind of notebook kept by du Junca, Lieutenant of the Bastille. On September 18, 1698, he records the arrival of the new Governor of the Bastille, M. de Saint–Mars, bringing with him, from his last place, the Isles Sainte–Marguerite, in the bay of Cannes, "an old prisoner whom he had at Pignerol. He keeps the prisoner always masked, his name is not spoken . . . and I have put him alone, in the third chamber of the Bertaudiere tower, having furnished it some days before with everything, by order of M. de Saint–Mars. The prisoner is to be served and cared for by M. de Rosarges," the officer next in command under Saint–Mars.[1]

[1] Funck–Brentano, *Legendes et Archives de la Bastille*, pp. 86, 87. Paris, 1898, p. 277, a facsimile of this entry.

The prisoner's death is entered by du Junca on November 19, 1703. To that entry we return later.

The Man in the Iron Mask

The existence of this prisoner was known and excited curiosity. On October 15, 1711, the Princess Palatine wrote about the case to the Electress Sophia of Hanover, "A man lived for long years in the Bastille, masked, and masked he died there. Two musketeers were by his side to shoot him if ever he unmasked. He ate and slept in his mask. There must, doubtless, have been some good reason for this, as otherwise he was very well treated, well lodged, and had everything given to him that he wanted. He took the Communion masked; was very devout, and read perpetually."

On October 22, 1711, the Princess writes that the Mask was an English nobleman, mixed up in the plot of the Duke of Berwick against William III.—Fenwick's affair is meant. He was imprisoned and masked that the Dutch usurper might never know what had become of him.[1]

[1] Op. cit. 98, note I.

The legend was now afloat in society. The sub-commandant of the Bastille from 1749 to 1787, Chevalier, declared, obviously on the evidence of tradition, that all the Mask's furniture and clothes were destroyed at his death, lest they might yield a clue to his identity. Louis XV. is said to have told Madame de Pompadour that the Mask was "the minister of an Italian prince." Louis XVI. told Marie Antoinette (according to Madame de Campan) that the Mask was a Mantuan intriguer, the same person as Louis XV. indicated. Perhaps he was, it is one of two possible alternatives. Voltaire, in the first edition of his "Siccle de Louis XIV.," merely spoke of a young, handsome, masked prisoner, treated with the highest respect by Louvois, the Minister of Louis XIV. At last, in "Questions sur l'Encyclopedie" (second edition), Voltaire averred that the Mask was the son of Anne of Austria and Mazarin, an elder brother of Louis XIV. Changes were rung on this note: the Mask was the actual King, Louis XIV. was a bastard. Others held that he was James, Duke of Monmouth—or Moliere! In 1770 Heiss identified him with Mattioli, the Mantuan intriguer, and especially after the appearance of the book by Roux Fazaillac, in 1801, that was the generally accepted opinion.

It MAY be true, in part. Mattioli MAY have been the prisoner who died in the Bastille in November 1703, but the legend of the Mask's prison life undeniably arose out of the adventure of our valet, Martin or Eustache Dauger.

II. THE VALET'S HISTORY

After reading the arguments of the advocates of Mattioli, I could not but perceive that, whatever captive died, masked, at the Bastille in 1703, the valet Dauger was the real source of most of the legends about the Man in the Iron Mask. A study of M. Lair's book "Nicholas Fouquet" (1890) confirmed this opinion. I therefore pushed the inquiry into a source neglected by the French historians, namely, the correspondence of the English ambassadors, agents, and statesmen for the years 1668, 1669.[1] One result is to confirm a wild theory of my own to the effect that the Man in the Iron Mask (if Dauger were he) may have been as great a mystery to himself as to historical inquirers. He may not have known WHAT he was imprisoned for doing! More important is the probable conclusion that the long and mysterious captivity of Eustache Dauger, and of another perfectly harmless valet and victim, was the mere automatic result of "red tape" of the old French absolute monarchy. These wretches were caught in the toils of the system, and suffered to no purpose, for no crime. The two men, at least Dauger, were apparently mere supernumeraries in the obscure intrigue of a conspirator known as Roux de Marsilly.

[1] The papers are in the Record Office; for the contents see the following essay, The Valet's Master.

This truly abominable tragedy of Roux de Marsilly is "another story," narrated in the following essay. It must suffice here to say that, in 1669, while Charles II. was negotiating the famous, or infamous, secret treaty with Louis XIV.—the treaty of alliance against Holland, and in favor of the restoration of Roman Catholicism in England—Roux de Marsilly, a French Huguenot, was dealing with Arlington and others, in favor of a Protestant league against France.

The Man in the Iron Mask

When he started from England for Switzerland in February, 1669, Marsilly left in London a valet called by him "Martin," who had quitted his service and was living with his own family. This man is the "Eustache Dauger" of our mystery. The name is his prison pseudonym, as "Lestang" was that of Mattioli. The French Government was anxious to lay hands on him, for he had certainly, as the letters of Marsilly prove, come and gone freely between that conspirator and his English employers. How much Dauger knew, what amount of mischief he could effect, was uncertain. Much or little, it was a matter which, strange to say, caused the greatest anxiety to Louis XIV. and to his Ministers for very many years. Probably long before Dauger died (the date is unknown, but it was more than twenty-five years after Marsilly's execution), his secret, if secret he possessed, had ceased to be of importance. But he was now in the toils of the French red tape, the system of secrecy which rarely released its victim. He was guarded, we shall see with such unheard-of rigor that popular fancy at once took him for some great, perhaps royal, personage.

Marsilly was publicly tortured to death in Paris on June 22, 1669. By July 19 his ex-valet, Dauger, had entered on his mysterious term of captivity. How the French got possession of him, whether he yielded to cajolery, or was betrayed by Charles II., is uncertain. The French ambassador at St. James's, Colbert (brother of the celebrated Minister), writes thus to M. de Lyonne, in Paris, on July 1, 1669:[1] "Monsieur Joly has spoken to the man Martin" (Dauger), "and has really persuaded him that, by going to France and telling all that he knows against Roux, he will play the part of a lad of honor and a good subject."

[1] Transcripts from Paris MSS., Vol. xxxiii., Record Office.

But Martin, after all, was NOT persuaded!

Martin replied to Joly that he knew nothing at all, and that, once in France, people would think he was well acquainted with the traffickings of Roux, "and so he would be kept in prison to make him divulge what he did not know." The possible Man in the Iron Mask did not know his own secret! But, later in the conversation, Martin foolishly admitted that he knew a great deal; perhaps he did this out of mere fatal vanity. Cross to France, however, he would not, even when offered a safe-conduct and promise of reward. Colbert therefore proposes to ask Charles to surrender the valet, and probably Charles descended to the meanness. By July 19, at all events, Louvois, the War Minister of Louis XIV., was bidding Saint-Mars, at Pignerol in Piedmont, expect from Dunkirk a prisoner of the very highest importance—a valet! This valet, now called "Eustache Dauger," can only have been Marsilly's valet, Martin, who, by one means or another, had been brought from England to Dunkirk. It is hardly conceivable, at least, that when a valet, in England, is "wanted" by the French police on July 1, for political reasons, and when by July 19 they have caught a valet of extreme political importance, the two valets should be two different men. Martin must be Dauger.

Here, then, by July 19, 1669, we find our unhappy serving man in the toils. Why was he to be handled with such mysterious rigor? It is true that State prisoners of very little account were kept with great secrecy. But it cannot well be argued that they were all treated with the extraordinary precautions which, in the case of Dauger, were not relaxed for twenty-five or thirty years. The King says, according to Louvois, that the safe keeping of Dauger is "of the last importance to his service." He must have intercourse with nobody. His windows must be where nobody can pass; several bolted doors must cut him off from the sound of human voices. Saint-Mars himself, the commandant, must feed the valet daily. "You must never, under any pretenses listen to what he may wish to tell you. You must threaten him with death if he speaks one word except about his actual needs. He is only a valet, and does not need much furniture." [1]

[1] The letters are printed by Roux Fazaillac, Jung, Lair, and others.

Saint-Mars replied that, in presence of M. de Vauroy, the chief officer of Dunkirk (who carried Dauger thence to Pignerol), he had threatened to run Dauger through the body if he ever dared to speak, even to him, Saint-Mars. He has mentioned this prisoner, he says, to no mortal. People believe that Dauger is a Marshal of France, so

The Man in the Iron Mask

strange and unusual are the precautions taken for his security.

A Marshal of France! The legend has begun. At this time (1669) Saint-Mars had in charge Fouquet, the great fallen Minister, the richest and most dangerous subject of Louis XIV. By-and-by he also held Lauzun, the adventurous wooer of la Grande Mademoiselle. But it was not they, it was the valet, Dauger, who caused "sensation."

On February 20, 1672, Saint-Mars, for the sake of economy, wished to use Dauger as valet to Lauzun. This proves that Saint-Mars did not, after all, see the necessity of secluding Dauger or thought the King's fears groundless. In the opinion of Saint-Mars, Dauger did not want to be released, "would never ask to be set free." Then why was he so anxiously guarded? Louvois refused to let Dauger be put with Lauzun as valet. In 1675, however, he allowed Dauger to act as valet to Fouquet, but with Lauzun, said Louvois, Dauger must have no intercourse. Fouquet had then another prisoner valet, La Riviere. This man had apparently been accused of no crime. He was of a melancholy character, and a dropsical habit of body: Fouquet had amused himself by doctoring him and teaching him to read.

In the month of December, 1678, Saint-Mars, the commandant of the prison, brought to Fouquet a sealed letter from Louvois, the seal unbroken. His own reply was also to be sealed, and not to be seen by Saint-Mars. Louvois wrote that the King wished to know one thing, before giving Fouquet ampler liberty. Had his valet, Eustache Dauger, told his other valet, La Riviere, what he had done before coming to Pignerol? (de ce a quoi il a ete employe auparavant que d'etre a Pignerol). "His Majesty bids me ask you [Fouquet] this question, and expects that you will answer without considering anything but the truth, that he may know what measures to take," these depending on whether Dauger has, or has not, told La Riviere the story of his past life.[1] Moreover, Lauzun was never, said Louvois, to be allowed to enter Fouquet's room when Dauger was present. The humorous point is that, thanks to a hole dug in the wall between his room and Fouquet's, Lauzun saw Dauger whenever he pleased.

[1] Lair, Nicholas Fouquet, ii. pp. 463, 464.

From the letter of Louvois to Fouquet, about Dauger (December 23, 1678), it is plain that Louis XIV. had no more pressing anxiety, nine years after Dauger's arrest, than to conceal what it was that Dauger had done. It is apparent that Saint-Mars himself either was unacquainted with this secret, or was supposed by Louvois and the King to be unaware of it. He had been ordered never to allow Dauger to tell him; he was not allowed to see the letters on the subject between Lauzun and Fouquet. We still do not know, and never shall know, whether Dauger himself knew his own secret, or whether (as he had anticipated) he was locked up for not divulging what he did not know.

The answer of Fouquet to Louvois must have satisfied Louis that Dauger had not imparted his secret to the other valet, La Riviere, for Fouquet was now allowed a great deal of liberty. In 1679, he might see his family, the officers of the garrison, and Lauzun—it being provided that Lauzun and Dauger should never meet. In March, 1680, Fouquet died, and henceforth the two valets were most rigorously guarded; Dauger, because he was supposed to know something; La Riviere, because Dauger might have imparted the real or fancied secret to him. We shall return to these poor serving men, but here it is necessary to state that, ten months before the death of their master, Fouquet, an important new captive had been brought to the prison of Pignerol.

This captive was the other candidate for the honors of the Mask, Count Mattioli, the secretary of the Duke of Mantua. He was kidnaped on Italian soil on May 2, 1679, and hurried to the mountain fortress of Pignerol, then on French ground. His offense was the betraying of the secret negotiations for the cession of the town and fortress of Casal, by the Duke of Mantua, to Louis XIV. The disappearance of Mattioli was, of course, known to the world. The cause of his enlevement, and the place of his captivity, Pignerol, were matters of newspaper comment at least as early as 1687. Still earlier, in 1682, the story of Mattioli's arrest and seclusion in Pignerol had been published in a work named "La Prudenza Trionfante di Casale." [1] There was thus no mystery, at the time, about

The Man in the Iron Mask

Mattioli; his crime and punishment were perfectly well known to students of politics. He has been regarded as the mysterious Man in the Iron Mask, but, for years after his arrest, he was the least mysterious of State prisoners.

[1] Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

Here, then, is Mattioli in Pignerol in May, 1679. While Fouquet then enjoyed relative freedom, while Lauzun schemed escapes or made insulting love to Mademoiselle Fouquet, Mattioli lived on the bread and water of affliction. He was threatened with torture to make him deliver up some papers compromising Louis XIV. It was expressly commanded that he should have nothing beyond the barest necessities of life. He was to be kept *dans la dure prison*. In brief, he was used no better than the meanest of prisoners. The awful life of isolation, without employment, without books, without writing materials, without sight or sound of man save when Saint-Mars or his lieutenant brought food for the day, drove captives mad.

In January, 1680, two prisoners, a monk[1] and one Dubreuil, had become insane. By February 14, 1680, Mattioli was daily conversing with God and his angels. "I believe his brain is turned," says Saint-Mars. In March, 1680, as we saw, Fouquet died. The prisoners, not counting Lauzun (released soon after), were now five: (1) Mattioli (mad); (2) Dubreuil (mad); (3) The monk (mad); (4) Daurer, and (5) La Riviere. These two, being employed as valets, kept their wits. On the death of Fouquet, Louvois wrote to Saint-Mars about the two valets. Lauzun must be made to believe that they had been set at liberty, but, in fact, they must be most carefully guarded IN A SINGLE CHAMBER. They were shut up in one of the dungeons of the "Tour d'en bas." Daurer had recently done something as to which Louvois writes: "Let me know how Daurer can possibly have done what you tell me, and how he got the necessary drugs, as I cannot suppose that you supplied him with them" (July 10, 1680).[2]

[1] A monk, who MAY have been this monk, appears in the following essay, p. 34, *infra*.

[2] Lair, Nicholas Fouquet, *ii.*, pp. 476, 477.

Here, then, by July, 1680, are the two valets locked in one dungeon of the "Tour d'en bas." By September Saint-Mars had placed Mattioli, with the mad monk, in another chamber of the same tower. He writes: "Mattioli is almost as mad as the monk," who arose from bed and preached naked. Mattioli behaved so rudely and violently that the lieutenant of Saint-Mars had to show him a whip, and threaten him with a flogging. This had its effect. Mattioli, to make his peace, offered a valuable ring to Blainvilliers. The ring was kept to be restored to him, if ever Louis let him go free—a contingency mentioned more than once in the correspondence.

Apparently Mattioli now sobered down, and probably was given a separate chamber and a valet; he certainly had a valet at Pignerol later. By May 1681, Daurer and La Riviere still occupied their common chamber in the "Tour d'en bas." They were regarded by Louvois as the most important of the five prisoners then at Pignerol. They, not Mattioli, were the captives about whose safe and secret keeping Louis and Louvois were most anxious. This appears from a letter of Louvois to Saint-Mars, of May 12, 1681. The jailer, Saint-Mars, is to be promoted from Pignerol to Exiles. "Thither," says Louvois, "the king desires to transport such of your prisoners as he thinks too important to have in other hands than yours." These prisoners are "the two in the low chamber of the tower," the two valets, Daurer and La Riviere.

From a letter of Saint-Mars (June, 1681) we know that Mattioli was not one of these. He says: "I shall keep at Exiles two birds (merles) whom I have here: they are only known as the gentry of the low room in the tower; Mattioli may stay on here at Pignerol with the other prisoners" (Dubreuil and the mad monk). It is at this point that Le Citoyen Roux (Fazaillac), writing in the Year IX. of the Republic (1801), loses touch with the secret.[1] Roux finds, in the State Papers, the arrival of Eustache Daurer at Pignerol in 1669, but does not know who he is, or what is his quality. He sees that the Mask must be either Mattioli, Daurer, the monk, one Dubreuil, or one Calazio. But, overlooking or not having access to the letter of Saint-Mars of June, 1681, Roux holds that the prisoners taken to Les Exiles were the monk and Mattioli. One of these must be the Mask, and Roux votes for

The Man in the Iron Mask

Mattioli. He is wrong. Mattioli beyond all doubt remained at Pignerol.

[1] *Recherches Historiques sur l'Homme au Masque de Fer*, Paris. An. IX.

Mountains of argument have been built on these words, deux merles, "two jail-birds." One of the two, we shall see, became the source of the legend of the Man in the Iron Mask. "How can a wretched jail-bird (merle) have been the Mask?" asks M. Topin. "The rogue's whole furniture and table-linen were sold for 11. 19s. He only got a new suit of clothes every three years." All very true; but this jail-bird and his mate, by the direct statement of Louvois, are "the prisoners too important to be intrusted to other hands than yours"—the hands of Saint-Mars—while Mattioli is so unimportant that he may be left at Pignerol under Villebois.

The truth is, that the offense and the punishment of Mattioli were well known to European diplomatists and readers of books. Casal, moreover, at this time was openly ceded to Louis XIV., and Mattioli could not have told the world more than it already knew. But, for some inscrutable reason, the secret which Dauger knew, or was suspected of knowing, became more and more a source of anxiety to Louvois and Louis. What can he have known? The charges against his master, Roux de Marsilly, had been publicly proclaimed. Twelve years had passed since the dealings of Arlington with Marsilly. Yet, Louvois became more and more nervous.

In accordance with commands of his, on March 2, 1682, the two valets, who had hitherto occupied one chamber at Exiles as at Pignerol, were cut off from all communication with each other. Says Saint-Mars, "Since receiving your letter I have warded the pair as strictly and exactly as I did M. Fouquet and M. Lauzun, who cannot brag that he sent or received any intelligence. Night and day two sentinels watch their tower; and my own windows command a view of the sentinels. Nobody speaks to my captives but myself, my lieutenant, their confessor, and the doctor, who lives eighteen miles away, and only sees them when I am present." Years went by; in January, 1687, one of the two captives died; we really do not know which with absolute certainty. However, the intensified secrecy with which the survivor was now guarded seems more appropriate to Dauger and M. Funck-Brentano and M. Lair have no doubt that it was La Riviere who expired. He was dropsical, that appears in the official correspondence, and the dead prisoner died of dropsy.

As for the strange secrecy about Dauger, here is an example. Saint-Mars, in January, 1687, was appointed to the fortress of the Isles Sainte-Marguerite, that sun themselves in the bay of Cannes. On January 20 he asks leave to go to see his little kingdom. He must leave Dauger, but has forbidden even his lieutenant to speak to that prisoner. This was an increase of precaution since 1682. He wishes to take the captive to the Isles, but how? A sedan chair covered over with oilcloth seems best. A litter might break down, litters often did, and some one might then see the passenger.

Now M. Funck-Brentano says, to minimize the importance of Dauger, "he was shut up like so much luggage in a chair hermetically closed with oilcloth, carried by eight Piedmontese relays of four."

Luggage is not usually carried in hermetically sealed sedan chairs, but Saint-Mars has explained why, by surplus of precaution, he did not use a litter. The litter might break down and Dauger might be seen. A new prison was built specially, at the cost of 5,000 lires, for Dauger at Sainte-Marguerite, with large sunny rooms. On May 3, 1687, Saint-Mars had entered on his island realm, Dauger being nearly killed by twelve days' journey in a closed chair. He again excited the utmost curiosity. On January 8, 1688, Saint-Mars writes that his prisoner is believed by the world to be either a son of Oliver Cromwell, or the Duc de Beaufort,[1] who was never seen again, dead or alive, after a night battle in Crete, on June 25, 1669, just before Dauger was arrested. Saint-Mars sent in a note of the TOTAL of Dauger's expenses for the year 1687. He actually did not dare to send the ITEMS, he says, lest they, if the bill fell into the wrong hands, might reveal too much.

[1] Duc de Beaufort whom Athos releases from prison in Dumas's *Vingt Ans Apres*.

The Man in the Iron Mask

Meanwhile, an Italian news-letter, copied into a Leyden paper, of August 1687, declared that Mattioli had just been brought from Pignerol to Sainte-Marguerite. There was no mystery about Mattioli, the story of his capture was published in 1682, but the press, on one point, was in error; Mattioli was still at Pignerol. The known advent of the late Commandant of Pignerol, Saint-Mars, with a single concealed prisoner, at the island, naturally suggested the erroneous idea that the prisoner was Mattioli. The prisoner was really Dauger, the survivor of the two valets.

From 1688 to 1691 no letter about Dauger has been published. Apparently he was then the only prisoner on the island, except one Chezut, who was there before Dauger arrived, and gave up his chamber to Dauger while the new cells were being built. Between 1689 and 1693 six Protestant preachers were brought to the island, while Louvois, the Minister, died in 1691, and was succeeded by Barbezieux. On August 13, 1691, Barbezieux wrote to ask Saint-Mars about "the prisoner whom he had guarded for twenty years." The only such prisoner was Dauger, who entered Pignerol in August, 1669. Mattioli had been a prisoner only for twelve years, and lay in Pignerol, not in Sainte-Marguerite, where Saint-Mars now was. Saint-Mars replied: "I can assure you that NOBODY HAS SEEN HIM BUT MYSELF."

By the beginning of March, 1694, Pignerol had been bombarded by the enemies of France; presently Louis XIV. had to cede it to Savoy. The prisoners there must be removed. Mattioli, in Pignerol, at the end of 1693, had been in trouble. He and his valet had tried to smuggle out letters written on the linings of their pockets. These were seized and burned. On March 20, 1694, Barbezieux wrote to Laprade, now commanding at Pignerol, that he must take his three prisoners, one by one, with all secrecy, to Sainte-Marguerite. Laprade alone must give them their food on the journey. The military officer of the escort was warned to ask no questions. Already (February 26, 1694) Barbezieux had informed Saint-Mars that these prisoners were coming. They are of more consequence, one of them at least, than the prisoners on the island, and must be put in the safest places." The "one" is doubtless Mattioli. In 1681 Louvois had thought Dauger and La Riviere more important than Mattioli, who, in March, 1694, came from Pignerol to Sainte-Marguerite. Now in April, 1694, a prisoner died at the island, a prisoner who, like Mattioli, HAD A VALET. We hear of no other prisoner on the island, except Mattioli who had a valet. A letter of Saint-Mars (January 6, 1696) proves that no prisoner THEN had a valet, for each prisoner collected his own dirty plates and dishes, piled them up, and handed them to the lieutenant.

M. Funck-Brentano argues that in this very letter (January 6, 1696) Saint-Mars speaks of "les valets de messieurs les prisonniers." But in THAT part of the letter Saint-Mars is not speaking of the actual state of things at Sainte-Marguerite, but is giving reminiscences of Fouquet and Lauzun, who, of course, at Pignerol, had valets, and had money, as he shows. Dauger had no money. M. Funck-Brentano next argues that early in 1694 one of the preacher prisoners, Melzac, died, and cites M. Jung ("La Verite sur le Masque de Fer," p. 91). This is odd, as M. Jung says that Melzac, or Malzac, "died in the end of 1692, or early in 1693." Why, then, does M. Funck-Brentano cite M. Jung for the death of the preacher early in 1694, when M. Jung (conjecturally) dates his decease at least a year earlier?[1] It is not a mere conjecture as, on March 3, 1693, Barbezieux begs Saint-Mars to mention his Protestant prisoners under nicknames. There are THREE, and Malzac is no longer one of them. Malzac, in 1692, suffered from a horrible disease, discreditable to one of the godly, and in October, 1692, had been allowed medical expenses. Whether they included a valet or not, Malzac seems to have been non-existent by March, 1693. Had he possessed a valet, and had he died in 1694, why should HIS valet have been "shut up in the vaulted prison"? This was the fate of the valet of the prisoner who died in April, 1694, and was probably Mattioli.

[1] M. Funck-Brentano's statement is in *Revue Historique*, lvi. p. 298. "Malzac died at the beginning of 1694," citing Jung, p. 91. Now on p. 91 M. Jung writes, "At the beginning of 1694 Saint-Mars had six prisoners, of whom one Melzac, dies." But M. Jung (pp. 269, 270) later writes, "It is probable that Melzac died at the end of 1692, or early in 1693," and he gives his reasons, which are convincing. M. Funck-Brentano must have overlooked M. Jung's change of opinion between his p. 91 and his pp. 269, 270.

The Man in the Iron Mask

Mattioli, certainly, had a valet in December, 1693, at Pignerol. He went to Sainte–Marguerite in March, 1694. In April, 1694, a prisoner with a valet died at Sainte–Marguerite. In January, 1696, no prisoner at Sainte–Marguerite had a valet. Therefore, there is a strong presumption that the "prisonnier au valet" who died in April, was Mattioli.

After December, 1693, when he was still at Pignerol, the name of Mattioli, freely used before, never occurs in the correspondence. But we still often hear of "l'ancien prisonnier," "the old prisoner." He was, on the face of it, Dauger, by far the oldest prisoner. In 1688, Saint–Mars, having only one prisoner (Dauger), calls him merely "my prisoner. In 1691, when Saint–Mars had several prisoners, Barbezieux styles Dauger "your prisoner of twenty years' standing." When, in 1696–1698, Saint–Mars mentions "mon ancien prisonnier," "my prisoner of long standing," he obviously means Dauger, not Mattioli—above all, if Mattioli died in 1694. M. Funck–Brentano argues that "mon ancien prisonnier" can only mean "my erstwhile prisoner, he who was lost and is restored to me"—that is, Mattioli. This is not the view of M. Jung, or M. Lair, or M. Loiseleur.

Friends of Mattioli's claims rest much on this letter of Barbezieux to Saint–Mars (November 17, 1697): "You have only to watch over the security of all your prisoners, without ever explaining to anyone what it is that your prisoner of long standing did." That secret, it is argued, MUST apply to Mattioli. But all the world knew what Mattioli had done! Nobody knew, and nobody knows, what Eustache Dauger had done. It was one of the arcana imperii. It is the secret enforced ever since Dauger's arrest in 1669. Saint–Mars (1669) was not to ask. Louis XIV. could only lighten the captivity of Fouquet (1678) if his valet, La Riviere, did not know what Dauger had done. La Riviere (apparently a harmless man) lived and died in confinement, the sole reason being that he might perhaps know what Dauger had done. Consequently there is the strongest presumption that the "ancien prisonnier" of 1697 is Dauger, and that "what he had done" (which Saint–Mars must tell to no one) was what Dauger did, not what Mattioli did. All Europe knew what Mattioli had done; his whole story had been published to the world in 1682 and 1687.

On July 19, 1698, Barbezieux bade Saint–Mars come to assume the command of the Bastille. He is to bring his "old prisoner," whom not a soul is to see. Saint–Mars therefore brought his man MASKED, exactly as another prisoner was carried masked from Provence to the Bastille in 1695. M. Funck–Brentano argues that Saint–Mars was now quite fond of his old Mattioli, so noble, so learned.

At last, on September 18, 1698, Saint–Mars lodged his "old prisoner" in the Bastille, "an old prisoner whom he had at Pignerol," says the journal of du Junca, Lieutenant of the Bastille. His food, we saw, was brought him by Rosarges alone, the "Major," a gentleman who had always been with Saint–Mars. Argues M. Funck–Brentano, all this proves that the captive was a gentleman, not a valet. Why? First, because the Bastille, under Louis XIV., was "une prison de distinction." Yet M. Funck–Brentano tells us that in Mazarin's time "valets mixed up with royal plots" were kept in the Bastille. Again, in 1701, in this "noble prison," the Mask was turned out of his room to make place for a female fortune–teller, and was obliged to chum with a profligate valet of nineteen, and a "beggarly" bad patriot, who "blamed the conduct of France, and approved that of other nations, especially the Dutch." M. Funck–Brentano himself publishes these facts (1898), in part published earlier (1890) by M. Lair.[1] Not much noblesse here! Next, if Rosarges, a gentleman, served the Mask, Saint–Mars alone (1669) carried his food to the valet, Dauger. So the service of Rosarges does not ennoble the Mask and differentiate him from Dauger, who was even more nobly served, by Saint–Mars.

[1] *Legendes de la Bastille*, pp. 86–89. Citing du Junca's Journal, April 30, 1701.

On November 19, 1703, the Mask died suddenly (still in his velvet mask), and was buried on the 20th. The parish register of the church names him "Marchialy" or "Marchioly," one may read it either way; du Junca, Lieutenant of the Bastille, in his contemporary journal, calls him "M. de Marchiel." Now, Saint–Mars often spells Mattioli, "Marthioly."

The Man in the Iron Mask

This is the one strength of the argument for Mattioli's claims to the Mask. M. Lair replies, "Saint–Mars had a mania for burying prisoners under fancy names," and gives examples. One is only a gardener, Francois Eliard (1701), concerning whom it is expressly said that, as he is a prisoner, his real name is not to be given, so he is registered as Pierre Maret (others read Navet, "Peter Turnip"). If Saint–Mars, looking about for a false name for Dauger's burial register, hit on Marsilly (the name of Dauger's old master), that MIGHT be miswritten Marchialy. However it be, the age of the Mask is certainly falsified; the register gives "about forty–five years old." Mattioli would have been sixty–three; Dauger cannot have been under fifty–three.

There the case stands. If Mattioli died in April, 1694, he cannot be the Man in the Iron Mask. Of Dauger's death we find no record, unless he was the Man in the Iron Mask, and died, in 1703, in the Bastille. He was certainly, in 1669 and 1688, at Pignerol and at Sainte–Marguerite, the center of the mystery about some great prisoner, a Marshal of France, the Duc de Beaufort, or a son of Oliver Cromwell. Mattioli was not mystery, no secret. Dauger is so mysterious that probably the secret of his mystery was unknown to himself. By 1701, when obscure wretches were shut up with the Mask, the secret, whatever its nature, had ceased to be of moment. The captive was now the mere victim of cruel routine. But twenty years earlier, Saint–Mars had said that Dauger "takes things easily, resigned to the will of God and the King."

To sum up, on July 1, 1669, the valet of the Huguenot intriguer, Roux de Marsilly, the valet resident in England, known to his master as "Martin," was "wanted" by the French secret police. By July 19, a valet, of the highest political importance, had been brought to Dunkirk, from England, no doubt. My hypothesis assumes that this valet, though now styled "Eustache Dauger," was the "Martin of Roux de Marsilly. He was kept with so much mystery at Pignerol that already the legend began its course; the captive valet was said to be a Marshal of France! We then follow Dauger from Pignerol to Les Exiles, till January, 1687, when one valet out of a pair, Dauger being one of them, dies. We presume that Dauger is the survivor, because the great mystery still is "what he HAS DONE," whereas the other valet had done nothing, but may have known Dauger's secret. Again the other valet had long been dropsical, and the valet who died in 1687 died of dropsy.

In 1688, Dauger, at Sainte–Marguerite, is again the source and center of myths; he is taken for a son of Oliver Cromwell, or for the Duc de Beaufort. In June 1692, one of the Huguenot preachers at Saint–Marguerite writes on his shirt and pewter plate and throws them out of the window.[1] Legend attributes these acts to the Man in the Iron Mask, and transmutes a pewter into a silver plate. Now, in 1689–1693, Mattioli was at Pignerol, but Dauger was at Sainte–Marguerite, and the Huguenot's act is attributed to him. Thus Dauger, not Mattioli, is the center round which the myths crystallize: the legends concern him, not Mattioli, whose case is well known, and gives rise to no legend. Finally, we have shown that Mattioli probably died at Sainte–Marguerite in April, 1694. If so, then nobody but Dauger can be the "old prisoner" whom Saint– Mars brought, masked, to the Bastille, in September, 1698, and who died there in November, 1703. However suppose that Mattioli did not die in 1694, but was the masked man who died in the Bastille in 1703, then the legend of Dauger came to be attributed to Mattioli: these two men's fortunes are combined in the one myth.

[1] Saint–Mars au Ministre, June 4, 1692.

The central problem remains unsolved.

What had the valet, Eustache Dauger, done?[1]

[1] One marvels that nobody has recognized, in the mask, James Stuart (James de la Cloche), eldest of the children of Charles II. He came to England in 1668, was sent to Rome, and "disappears from history." See infra, "The Mystery of James de la Cloche."

III. THE VALET'S MASTER

The secret of the Man in the Iron Mask, or at least of one of the two persons who have claims to be the Mask, was "What had Eustache Dauger done?" To guard this secret the most extraordinary precautions were taken, as we have shown in the foregoing essay. And yet, if secret there was, it might have got wind in the simplest fashion. In the "Vicomte de Bragelonne," Dumas describes the tryst of the Secret-hunters with the dying Chief of the Jesuits at the inn in Fontainebleau. They come from many quarters, there is a Baron of Germany and a laird from Scotland, but Aramis takes the prize. He knows the secret of the Mask, the most valuable of all to the intriguers of the Company of Jesus.

Now, despite all the precautions of Louvois and Saint-Mars, despite sentinels for ever posted under Dauger's windows, despite arrangements which made it impossible for him to signal to people on the hillside at Les Exiles, despite the suppression even of the items in the accounts of his expenses, his secret, if he knew it, could have been discovered, as we have remarked, by the very man most apt to make mischievous use of it—by Lauzun. That brilliant and reckless adventurer could see Dauger, in prison at Pignerol, when he pleased, for he had secretly excavated a way into the rooms of his fellow prisoner, Fouquet, on whom Dauger attended as valet. Lauzun was released soon after Fouquet's death. It is unlikely that he bought his liberty by the knowledge of the secret and there is nothing to suggest that he used it (if he possessed it) in any other way.

The natural clew to the supposed secret of Dauger is a study of the career of his master, Roux de Marsilly. As official histories say next to nothing about him, we may set forth what can be gleaned from the State Papers in our Record Office. The earliest is a letter of Roux de Marsilly to Mr. Joseph Williamson, secretary of Lord Arlington (December, 1668). Marsilly sends Martin (on our theory Eustache Dauger) to bring back from Williamson two letters from his own correspondent in Paris. He also requests Williamson to procure for him from Arlington a letter of protection, as he is threatened with arrest for some debt in which he is not really concerned. Martin will explain. The next paper is indorsed "Received December 28, 1668, Mons. de Marsilly." As it is dated December 27, Marsilly must have been in England. The contents of this piece deserve attention, because they show the terms on which Marsilly and Arlington were, or, at least, how Marsilly conceived them.

(1) Marsilly reports, on the authority of his friends at Stockholm, that the King of Sweden intends, first to intercede with Louis XIV. in favor of the French Huguenots, and next, if diplomacy fails, to join in arms with the other Protestant Powers of Europe.

(2) His correspondent in Holland learns that if the King of England invites the States to any "holy resolution," they will heartily lend forces. No leader so good as the English King—Charles II.! Marsilly had shown ARLINGTON'S LETTER to a Dutch friend, who bade him approach the Dutch ambassador in England. He has dined with that diplomatist. Arlington had, then, gone so far as to write an encouraging letter. The Dutch ambassador had just told Marsilly that he had received the same news, namely, that, Holland would aid the Huguenots, persecuted by Louis XIV.

(3) Letters from Provence, Languedoc, and Dauphine say that the situation there is unaltered.

(4) The Canton of Zurich write that they will keep their promises and that Berne is anxious to please the King of Great Britain, and that it is ready to raise, with Zurich, 15,000 men. They are not afraid of France.

(5) Zurich fears that, if Charles is not represented at the next Diet, Bale and Saint Gall will be intimidated, and not dare to join the Triple Alliance of Spain, Holland, and England. The best plan will be for Marsilly to represent England at the Diet of January 25, 1669, accompanied by the Swiss General Balthazar. This will encourage friends "to give His Britannic Majesty the satisfaction which he desires, and will produce a close union between Holland, Sweden, the Cantons, and other Protestant States."

The Man in the Iron Mask

This reads as if Charles had already expressed some "desire."

(6) Geneva grumbles at a reply of Charles "through a bishop who is their enemy," the Bishop of London, "a persecutor of our religion," that is, of Presbyterianism. However, nothing will dismay the Genevans, "si S. M. B. ne change."

Then comes a blank in the paper. There follows a copy of a letter as if from Charles II. himself, to "the Right High and Noble Seigneurs of Zurich." He has heard of their wishes from Roux de Marsilly, whom he commissions to wait upon them. "I would not have written by my Bishop of London had I been better informed, but would myself have replied to your obliging letter, and would have assured you, as I do now, that I desire. . . ."

It appears as if this were a draft of a kind of letter which Marsilly wanted Charles to write to Zurich, and there is a similar draft of a letter for Arlington to follow, if he and Charles wish to send Marsilly to the Swiss Diet. The Dutch ambassador, with whom Marsilly dined on December 26, the Constable of Castille, and other grandees, are all of opinion that he should visit the Protestant Swiss, as from the King of England. The scheme is for an alliance of England, Holland, Spain, and the Protestant Cantons, against France and Savoy.

Another letter of Marsilly to Arlington, only dated Jeudi, avers that he can never repay Arlington for his extreme kindness and liberality. "No man in England is more devoted to you than I am, and shall be all my life." [1]

[1] State Papers, France, vol. 125, 106.

On the very day when Marsilly drafted for Charles his own commission to treat with Zurich for a Protestant alliance against France, Charles himself wrote to his sister, Madame (Henriette d'Orleans). He spoke of his secret treaty with France. "You know how much secrecy is necessary for the carrying on of the business, and I assure you that nobody does, nor shall, know anything of it here, but myself and that one person more, till it be fit to be public." [1] (Is "that one person" de la Cloche?)

[1] Madame, by Julia Cartwright, p. 275.

Thus Marsilly thought Charles almost engaged for the Protestant League, while Charles was secretly allying himself with France against Holland. Arlington was probably no less deceived by Charles than Marsilly was.

The Bishop of London's share in the dealing with Zurich is obscure.

It appears certain that Arlington was not consciously deceiving Marsilly. Madame wrote, on February 12, as to Arlington, "The man's attachment to the Dutch and his inclination towards Spain are too well known." [1] Not till April 25, 1669, does Charles tell his sister that Arlington has an inkling of his secret dealings with France; how he knows, Charles cannot tell. [2] It is impossible for us to ascertain how far Charles himself deluded Marsilly, who went to the Continent early in spring, 1669. Before May 15–25, 1669, in fact on April 14, Marsilly had been kidnaped by agents of Louis XIV., and his doom was dight. Here is the account of the matter, written to ——— by Perwich in Paris:

[1] Ibid., p. 281.

[2] Ibid., p. 285.

"W. Perwich to ———

"Paris, May 25, '69.

The Man in the Iron Mask

"Honored Sir,

"The Cantons of Switzerland are much troubled at the French King's having sent fifteen horsemen into Switzerland from whence the Sr de Manille, the King's resident there, had given information of the Sr Roux de Marsilly's being there negotiating the bringing the Cantons into the Triple League by discourses much to the disadvantage of France, giving them very ill impressions of the French King's Government, who was betrayed by a monk that kept him company and intercepted by the said horsemen brought into France and is expected at the Bastille. I believe you know the man. . . . I remember him in England."

Can this monk be the monk who went mad in prison at Pignerol, sharing the cell of Mattioli? Did he, too, suffer for his connection with the secret? We do not know, but the position of Charles was awkward. Marsilly, dealing with the Swiss, had come straight from England, where he was lie with Charles's minister, Arlington, and with the Dutch and Spanish ambassadors. The King refers to the matter in a letter to his sister of May 24, 1669 (misdated by Miss Cartwright, May 24, 1668.)[1]

[1] Madame, by Julia Cartwright, p. 264.

"You have, I hope, received full satisfaction by the last post in the matter of Marsillac [Marsilly], for my Ld. Arlington has sent to Mr. Montague [English ambassador at Paris] his history all the time he was here, by which you will see how little credit he had here, and that particularly my Lord Arlington was not in his good graces, because he did not receive that satisfaction, in his negotiation, he expected, and that was only in relation to the Swissers, and so I think I have said enough of this matter."

Charles took it easily!

On May 15/25 Montague acknowledged Arlington's letter to which Charles refers; he has been approached, as to Marsilly, by the Spanish resident, "but I could not tell how to do anything in the business, never having heard of the man, or that he was employed by my Master [Charles] in any business. I have sent you also a copy of a letter which an Englishman writ to me that I do not know, in behalf of Roux de Marsilly, but that does not come by the post," being too secret.[1]

[1] State Papers, France, vol. 126.

France had been well-informed about Marsilly while he was in England. He then had a secretary, two lackeys, and a valet de chambre, and was frequently in conference with Arlington and the Spanish ambassador to the English Court. Colbert, the French ambassador in London, had written all this to the French Government, on April 25, before he heard of Marsilly's arrest.[1]

[1] Bibl. Nat., Fonds. Francais, No. 10665.

The belief that Marsilly was an agent of Charles appears to have been general, and, if accepted by Louis XIV., would interfere with Charles's private negotiations for the Secret Treaty with France. On May 18 Prince d'Areberg had written on the subject to the Spanish ambassador in Paris. Marsilly, he says, was arrested in Switzerland, on his way to Berne, with a monk who was also seized, and, a curious fact, Marsilly's valet was killed in the struggle. This valet, of course, was not Dauger, whom Marsilly had left in England. Marsilly "doit avoir demande la protection du Roy de la Grande Bretagne en faveur des Religionaires (Huguenots) de France, et passer en Suisse avec quelque commission de sa part." D'Areberg begs the Spanish ambassador to communicate all this to Montague, the English ambassador at Paris, but Montague probably, like Perwich, knew nothing of the business any more than he knew of Charles's secret dealings with Louis through Madame.[1]

[1] State Papers, France. vol. 126.

The Man in the Iron Mask

To d'Aremberg's letter is pinned an unsigned English note, obviously intended for Arlington's reading.

"Roux de Marsilly is still in the Bastille though they have a mind to hang him, yet they are much puzzled what to do with him. De Lionne has been to examine him twice or thrice, but there is no witness to prove anything against him. I was told by one that the French king told it to, that in his papers they find great mention of the Duke of Bucks: and your name, and speak as if he were much trusted by you. I have enquired what this Marsilly is, and I find by one Mr. Marsilly that I am acquainted withall, and a man of quality, that this man's name is onely Roux, and borne at Nismes and having been formerly a soldier in his troope, ever since has taken his name to gain more credit in Switzerland where hee, Marsilly, formerly used to be employed by his Coll: the Mareschall de Schomberg who invaded Switzerland."

We next find a very curious letter, from which it appears that the French Government inclined to regard Marsilly as, in fact, an agent of Charles, but thought it wiser to trump up against him a charge of conspiring against the life of Louis XIV. On this charge, or another, he was executed, while the suspicion that he was an agent of English treachery may have been the real cause of the determination to destroy him. The Balthazar with whom Marsilly left his papers is mentioned with praise by him in his paper for Arlington, of December 27, 1668. He is the General who should have accompanied Marsilly to the Diet.

The substance of the letter (given in full in Note I.) is to the following effect. P. du Moulin (Paris, May 19/29 1669) writes to Arlington. Ever since, Ruvigny, the late French ambassador, a Protestant, was in England, the French Government had been anxious to kidnap Roux de Marsilly. They hunted him in England, Holland, Flanders, and Franche-Comte. As we know from the case of Mattioli, the Government of Louis XIV. was unscrupulously daring in breaking the laws of nations, and seizing hostile personages in foreign territory, as Napoleon did in the affair of the Duc d'Enghien. When all failed Louis bade Turenne capture Roux de Marsilly wherever he could find him. Turenne sent officers and gentlemen abroad, and, after four months' search they found Marsilly in Switzerland. They took him as he came out of the house of his friend, General Balthazar, and carried him to Gex. No papers were found on him, but he asked his captors to send to Balthazar and get "the commission he had from England," which he probably thought would give him the security of an official diplomatic position. Having got this document, Marsilly's captors took it to the French Ministers. Nothing could be more embarrassing, if this were true, to Charles's representative in France, Montague, and to Charles's secret negotiations, also to Arlington, who had dealt with Marsilly. On his part, the captive Marsilly constantly affirmed that he was the envoy of the King of England. The common talk of Paris was that an agent of Charles was in the Bastille, "though at Court they pretended to know nothing of it." Louis was overjoyed at Marsilly's capture, giving out that he was conspiring against his life. Monsieur told Montague that he need not beg for the life of a would-be murderer like Marsilly. But as to this idea, "they begin now to mince it at Court," and Ruvigny assured du Moulin "that they had no such thoughts." De Lyonne had seen Marsilly and observed that it was a blunder to seize him. The French Government was nervous, and Turenne's secretary had been "pumping" several ambassadors as to what they thought of Marsilly's capture on foreign territory. One ambassador replied with spirit that a crusade of all Europe against France, as of old against the Moslems, would be necessary. Would Charles, du Moulin asked, own or disown Marsilly?

Montague's position was now awkward. On May 23, his account of the case was read, at Whitehall, to the Foreign Committee in London. (See Note II. for the document.) He did not dare to interfere in Marsilly's behalf, because he did not know whether the man was an agent of Charles or not. Such are the inconveniences of a secret royal diplomacy carried on behind the backs of Ministers. Louis XV. later pursued this method with awkward consequences.[1] The French Court, Montague said, was overjoyed at the capture of Marsilly, and a reward of 100,000 crowns, "I am told very privately, is set upon his head." The French ambassador in England, Colbert, had reported that Charles had sent Marsilly "to draw the Swisses into the Triple League" against France. Montague had tried to reassure Monsieur (Charles's brother-in-law), but was himself entirely perplexed. As Monsieur's wife, Charles's sister, was working with Charles for the secret treaty with Louis, the State and family politics were clearly in a knot. Meanwhile, the Spanish ambassador kept pressing Montague to interfere in favor of Marsilly.

The Man in the Iron Mask

After Montague's puzzled note had been read to the English Foreign Committee on May 23, Arlington offered explanations. Marsilly came to England, he said, when Charles was entering into negotiations for peace with Holland, and when France seemed likely to oppose the peace. No proposition was made to him or by him. Peace being made, Marsilly was given money to take him out of the country. He wanted the King to renew his alliance with the Swiss cantons, but was told that the cantons must first expel the regicides of Charles I. He undertook to arrange this, and some eight months later came back to England. "He was coldly used, and I was complained of for not using so important a man well enough."

[1] Cf. *Le Secret du Roi*, by the Duc de Broglie.

As we saw, Marsilly expressed the most effusive gratitude to Arlington, which does not suggest cold usage. Arlington told the complainers that Marsilly was "another man's spy," what man's, Dutch, Spanish, or even French, he does not explain. So Charles gave Marsilly money to go away. He was never trusted with anything but the expulsion of the regicides from Switzerland. Arlington was ordered by Charles to write a letter thanking Balthazar for his good offices.

These explanations by Arlington do not tally with Marsilly's communications to him, as cited at the beginning of this inquiry. Nothing is said in these about getting the regicides of Charles I. out of Switzerland: the paper is entirely concerned with bringing the Protestant Cantons into anti-French League with England, Holland, Spain, and even Sweden. On the other hand, Arlington's acknowledged letter to Balthazar, carried by Marsilly, may be the "commission" of which Marsilly boasted. In any case, on June 2, Charles gave Colbert, the French ambassador, an audience, turning even the Duke of York out of the room. He then repeated to Colbert the explanations of Arlington, already cited, and Arlington, in a separate interview, corroborated Charles. So Colbert wrote to Louis (June 3, 1669); but to de Lyonne, on the same day, "I trust that you will extract from Marsilly much matter for the King's service. It seemed to me that milord d'Arlington was uneasy about it [en avait de l'inquietude]. . . . There is here in England one Martin" (Eustace Dager), "who has been that wretch's valet, and who left him discontent." Colbert then proposes to examine Martin, who may know a good deal, and to send him into France. On June 10, Colbert writes to Louis that he expects to see Martin.[1]

[1] *Bibl. Nat., Fonds. Francais, No. 10665.*

On June 24, Colbert wrote to Louis about a conversation with Charles. It is plain that proofs of a murder-plot by Marsilly were scanty or non-existent, though Colbert averred that Marsilly had discussed the matter with the Spanish Ministers. "Charles knew that he had had much conference with Isola, the Spanish ambassador." Meanwhile, up to July 1, Colbert was trying to persuade Marsilly's valet to go to France, which he declined to do, as we have seen. However, the luckless lad, by nods and by veiled words, indicated that he knew a great deal. But not by promise of security and reward could the valet be induced to return to France. "I might ask the King to give up Martin, the valet of Marsilly, to me," Colbert concludes, and, by hook or by crook, he secured the person of the wretched man, as we have seen. In a postscript, Colbert says that he has heard of the execution of Marsilly.

By July 19, as we saw in the previous essay, Louvois was bidding Saint-Mars expect, at Pignerol from Dunkirk, a prisoner of the highest political importance, to be guarded with the utmost secrecy, yet a valet. That valet must be Martin, now called Eustache Dager, and his secret can only be connected with Marsilly. It may have been something about Arlington's negotiations through Marsilly, as compromising Charles II. Arlington's explanations to the Foreign Committee were certainly incomplete and disingenuous. He, if not Charles, was more deeply engaged with Marsilly than he ventured to report. But Marsilly himself avowed that he did not know why he was to be executed.

Executed he was, in circumstances truly hideous. Perwich, June 5, wrote to an unnamed correspondent in England: "They have all his papers, which speak much of the Triple Alliance, but I know not whether they can lawfully hang him for this, having been naturalized in Holland, and taken in a privileged country" (Switzerland).

The Man in the Iron Mask

Montague (Paris, June 22, 1669) writes to Arlington that Marsilly is to die, so it has been decided, for "a rape which he formerly committed at Nismes," and after the execution, on June 26, declares that, when broken on the wheel, Marsilly "still persisted that he was guilty of nothing, nor did know why he was put to death."

Like Eustache Dauger, Marsilly professed that he did not know his own secret. The charge of a rape, long ago, at Nismes, was obviously trumped up to cover the real reason for the extraordinary vindictiveness with which he was pursued, illegally taken, and barbarously slain. Mere Protestant restlessness on his part is hardly an explanation. There was clearly no evidence for the charge of a plot to murder Louis XIV., in which Colbert, in England, seems to have believed. Even if the French Government believed that he was at once an agent of Charles II., and at the same time a would-be assassin of Louis XIV., that hardly accounts for the intense secrecy with which his valet, Eustache Dauger, was always surrounded. Did Marsilly know of the Secret Treaty, and was it from him that Arlington got his first inkling of the royal plot? If so, Marsilly would probably have exposed the mystery in Protestant interests. We are entirely baffled.

In any case, Francis Vernon, writing from Paris to Williamson (?) (June 19/25, 1669), gave a terrible account of Marsilly's death. (For the letter, see Note V.) With a broken piece of glass (as we learn from another source), Marsilly, in prison, wounded himself in a ghastly manner, probably hoping to die by loss of blood. They seared him with a red-hot iron, and hurried on his execution. He was broken on the wheel, and was two hours in dying (June 22). Contrary to usage, a Protestant preacher was brought to attend him on the scaffold. He came most reluctantly, expecting insult, but not a taunt was uttered by the fanatic populace. "He came up the scaffold, great silence all about," Marsilly lay naked, stretched on a St. Andrew's cross. He had seemed half dead, his head hanging limp, "like a drooping calf." To greet the minister of his own faith, he raised himself, to the surprise of all, and spoke out loud and clear. He utterly denied all share in a scheme to murder Louis. The rest may be read in the original letter (p. 51).

So perished Roux de Marsilly; the history of the master throws no light on the secret of the servant. That secret, for many years, caused the keenest anxiety to Louis XIV. and Louvois. Saint-Mars himself must not pry into it. Yet what could Dauger know? That there had been a conspiracy against the King's life? But that was the public talk of Paris. If Dauger had guilty knowledge, his life might have paid for it; why keep him a secret prisoner? Did he know that Charles II. had been guilty of double dealing in 1668-1669? Probably Charles had made some overtures to the Swiss, as a blind to his private dealings with Louis XIV., but, even so, how could the fact haunt Louis XIV. like a ghost? We leave the mystery much darker than we found it, but we see good reason why diplomatists should have murmured of a crusade against the cruel and brigand Government which sent soldiers to kidnap, in neighboring states, men who did not know their own crime.

To myself it seems not improbable that the King and Louvois were but stupidly and cruelly nervous about what Dauger MIGHT know. Saint-Mars, when he proposed to utilize Dauger as a prison valet, manifestly did not share the trembling anxieties of Louis XIV. and his Minister; anxieties which grew more keen as time went on. However, "a soldier only has his orders," and Saint-Mars executed his orders with minute precision, taking such unheard-of precautions that, in legend, the valet blossomed into the rightful kind of France.